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OCTOBER 2010

The Inaugural SportAccord Combat Games

Art Imitating Art

Unforgettable Village

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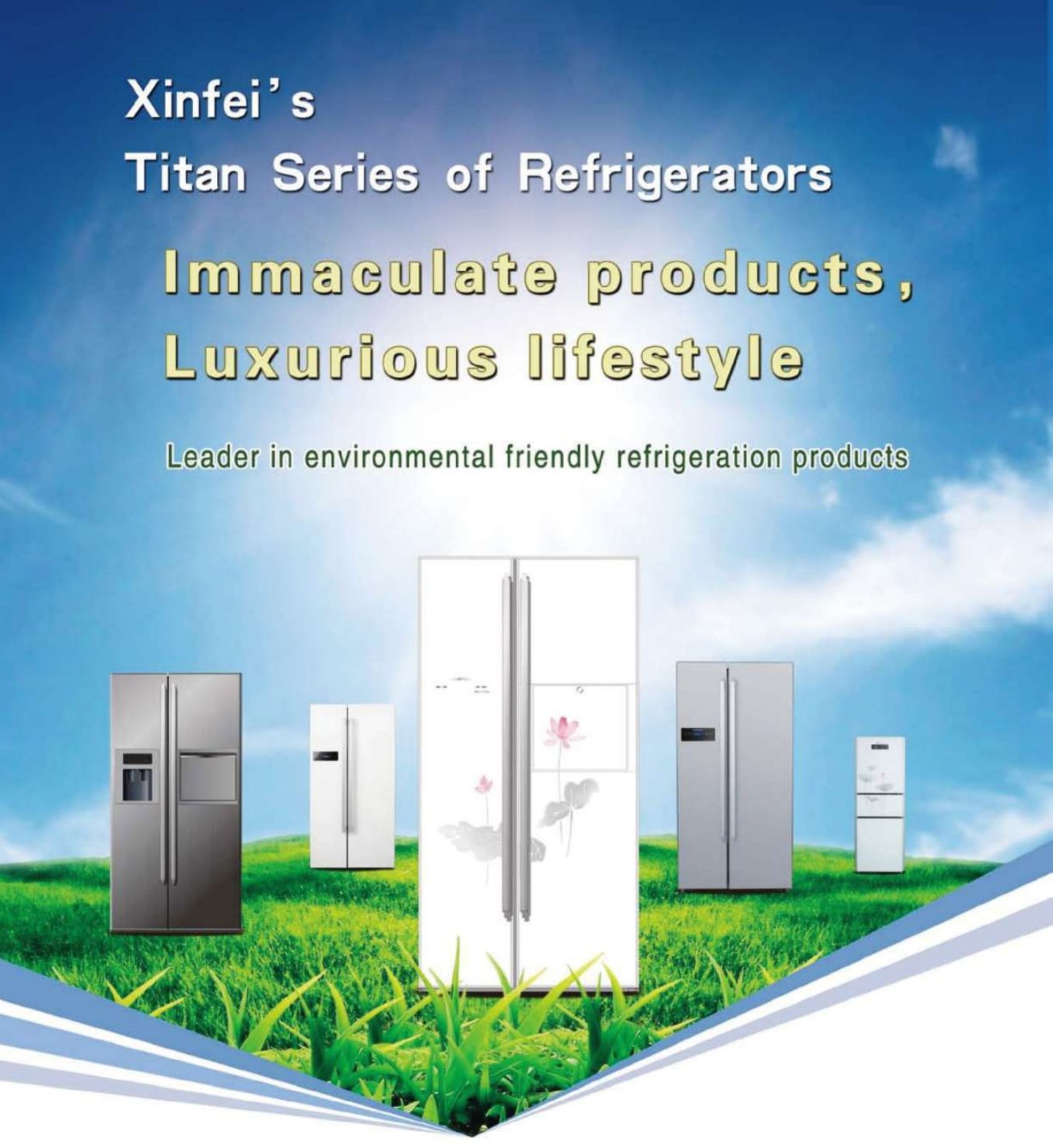
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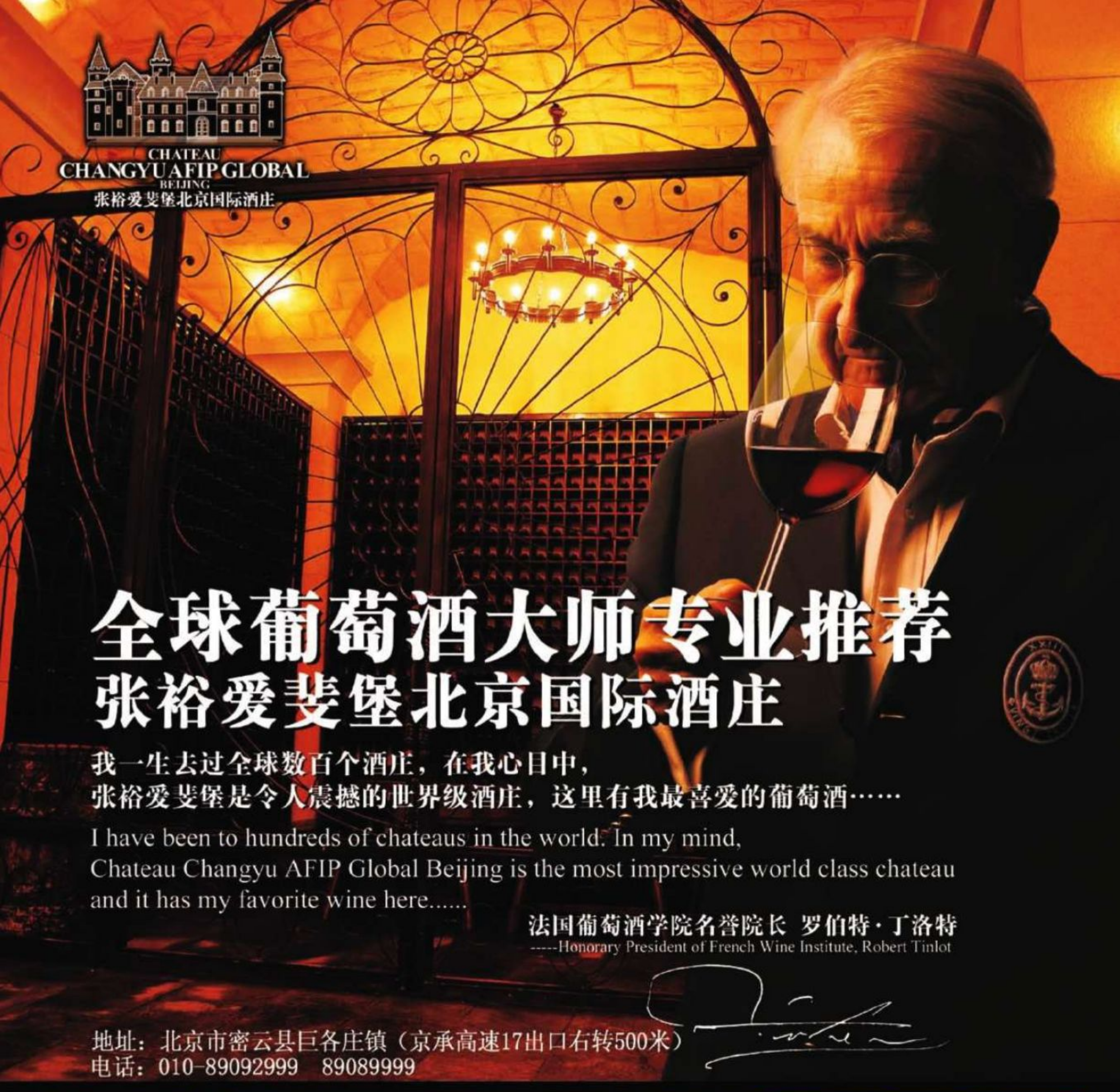

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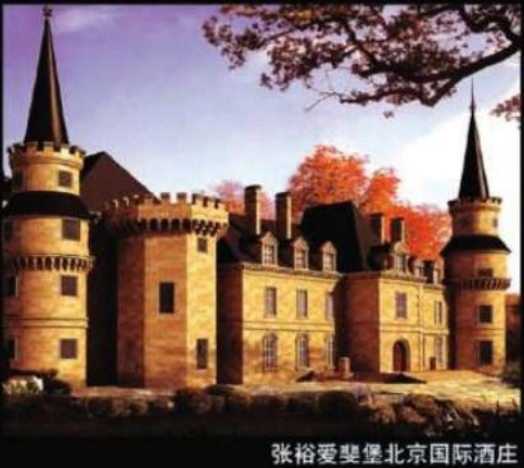

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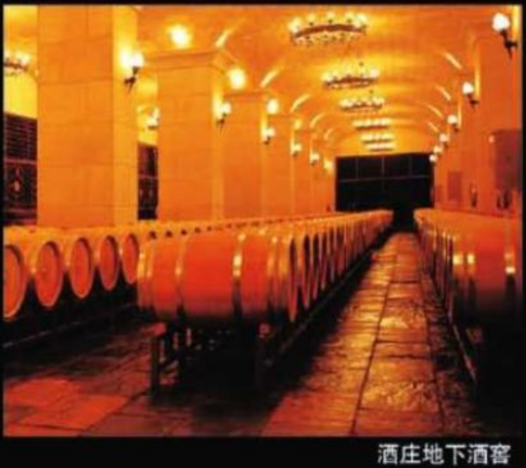

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Athletes from Chinese Taipei team and Turkey compete in the women's 50-kg category of karate. ***by Chen Jian***

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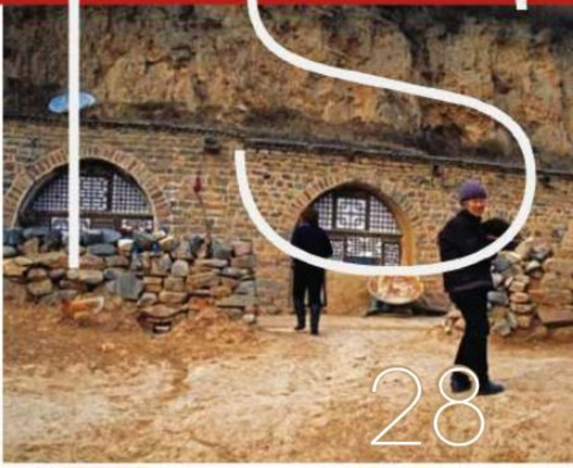
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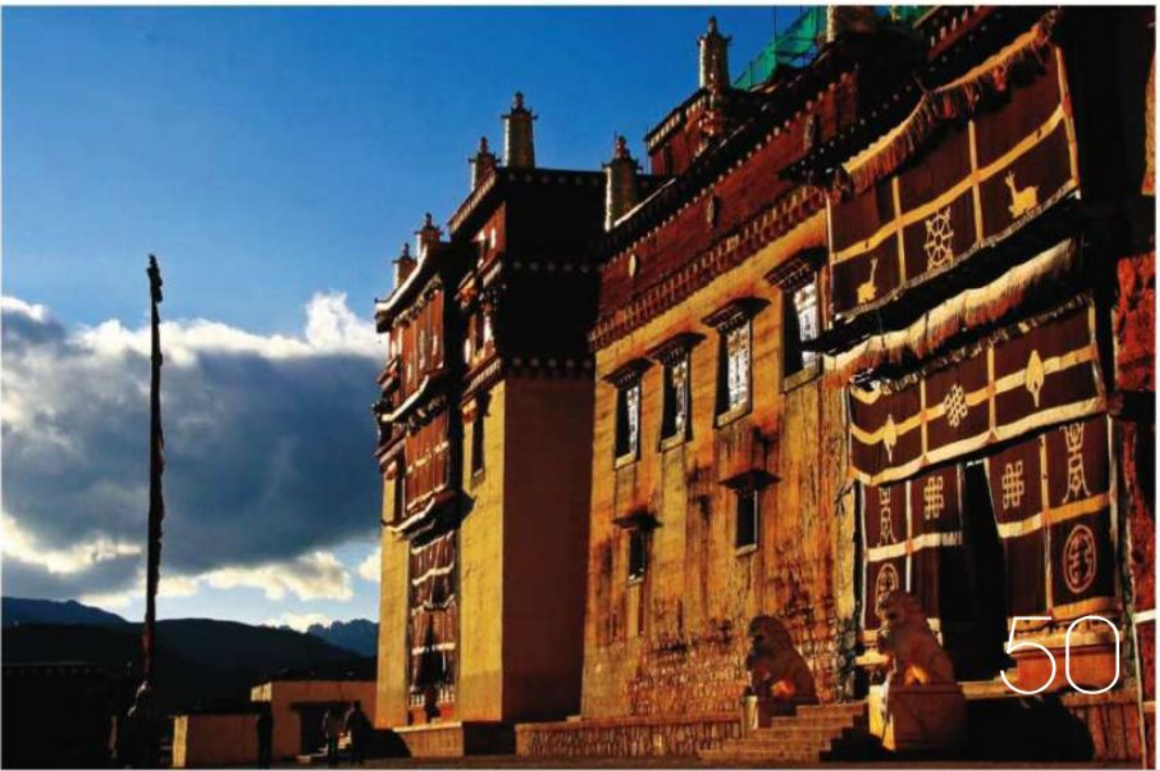
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Changchun
Changbai Mountain
Beijing

CHINAPICTORIAL

Travel Destination of the Month

Forever Changbai Mountain

Changbai Mountain (or Changbaishan) rests in Jilin Province in northeast China near the border of Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Covered by snow year-round, the mountain's stunning landscapes are all natural, without a touch of human effort. Scientists estimate the mountain, now a dormant volcano, erupted three times during its history. Home to a wealth of vegetation, almost every kind of plant from Northeast Asia to the North Pole can be found on Changbai. On its slopes with a vertical height of less than two kilometers, there are over 1,600 wild economic plants.

Speaking of trips to the mountain usually conjures images of winter sports. Actually, autumn is prime tourist season, when the mountain is painted most colorful. Red maples, green pines, and silver birches set off the blue sky to create a sublime picture. As the weather turns cooler, the mountain's dominant green gradually melts into shades of yellow, orange, red, and purple all mixed together. The gorgeous scenery not only attracts tourists, but plenty of photographers as well.

Autumn also heralds harvest time for the mountain's edible gifts. The season is ideal for trying its walnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, kiwis, and mountain grapes. Visitors also like to bring home mushrooms and ginseng.

Still, autumn's later months, October and November, are far enough removed from Changbai's peak travel season, so that accommodations are comparatively inexpensive. However, China's National Day Holiday from October 1 to 7 is one of the busiest travel periods throughout the country, and Changbai is not immune to floods of visitors during that week. It is recommended to book a hotel room in advance. Also, remember that temperatures at the high altitude of the mountain can dip much lower than in other areas, so be sure to bring adequate warm clothing.

Beautiful Changbai Mountain. CFP

Tianchi Lake on Changbai Mountain in autumn. IC

Sixth Strait Travel Fair

The Sixth Strait Travel Fair commenced on September 6 in Xiamen of southeastern China's Fujian Province.

The fair featured a variety of activities such as exhibitions, investment forums, and travel promotions. The event placed a special emphasis on the continuing development of cross-Straits tourism, as the numbers of visitors from the Chinese mainland visiting Taiwan and vice versa continue to increase. The theme of the fair is "Co-operation and Win-Win for Cross-Straits Travel."

Qinghai Tourism Promotion

Recently, Qinghai's tourism publicity campaign, themed "Yushu is Never Down and Qinghai is Forever Green," was held in Beijing. More than 100 travel agencies and businesses from all over China participated.

With abundant tourism resources, Qinghai boasts a unique landscape, amazing culture, and fascinating folk customs. The event aims to rejuvenate Qinghai's tourism industry after the recent Yushu Earthquake.

Beijing's Tallest

The tallest building in Beijing, China World Trade Center Tower 3, opened officially on August 30.

The 74-story skyscraper reaches a height of 330 meters and covers an area of 300,000 square meters. The building's 7th through 53rd floors are all reserved for use as office space. A hotel and restaurants are located on the top few floors, and a helipad is on the roof.

Ticket Prices Rise

Tickets to enter the ancient walled city of Pingyao in north China's Shanxi Province will increase to 125 yuan (US$18) from 100 yuan (US$15) in six months with a 20-percent price fluctuation for low and peak tourist seasons.

Under the new price scheme, the tickets are valid for three days instead of two. No additional payment is necessary once visitors are inside the walled city. Additional proceeds from ticket sales will be used for cultural preservation of the site.

Pingyao's ancient walled city was added to the World Cultural Heritage List in 1997.

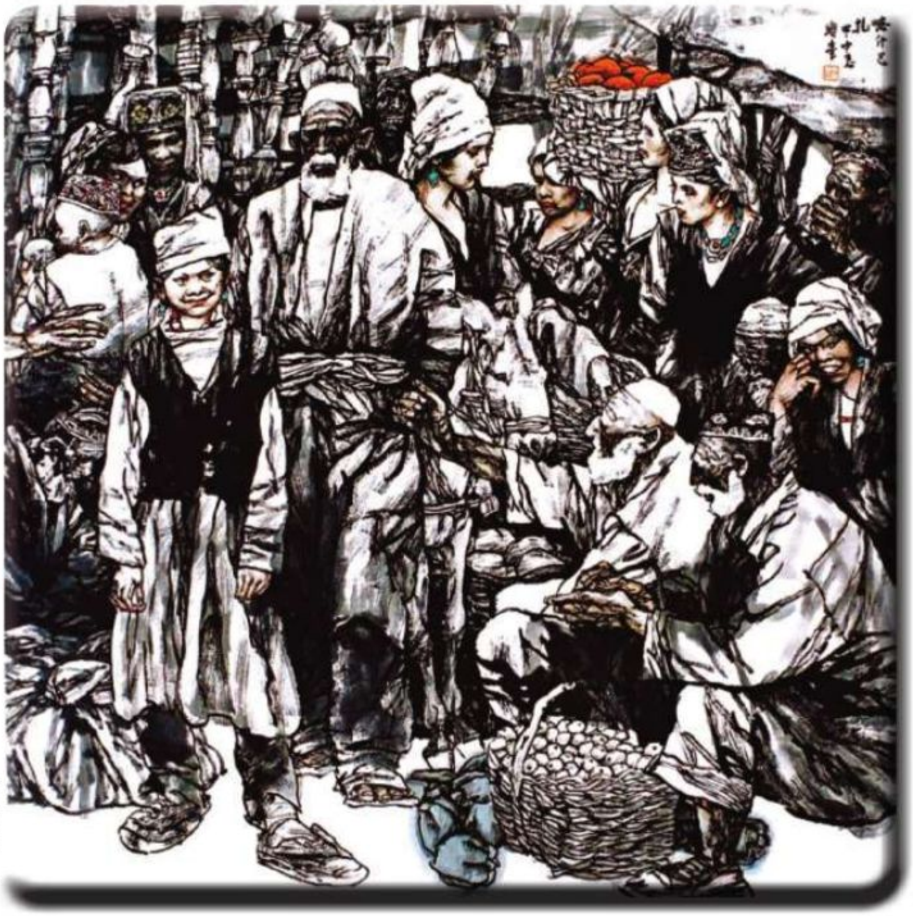
First China Cultural Festival

The First China International Cultural Festival, cosponsored by China's Ministry of Culture, National Tourism Administration, and Hunan Provincial People's Government, will be held from October 23 to November 13 in Zhangjiajie City of Hunan Province.

The event's theme is "Touring China and Appreciating Its Culture" and it features four major events, including the opening ceremony, celebrity interviews, an awards ceremony for cultural tourism development, and exhibitions on Chinese cultural tourism. During the festival, publicity teams from several dozen renowned Chinese scenic zones will attend to better promote their respective attractions.

Watching the West

On August 26, "Watching the West — Li Baofeng's Chinese Painting Exhibition" was held at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. While living in western China's Gansu Province for more than 40 years, Li chose to paint his subjects with a stunningly realistic approach. He applies traditional Chinese ink and wash paintings to showcase regions of western China, including Xinjiang and Tibet. With a distinctive style, Li's work is full of passion for the land.



A Li Baofeng painting depicting a bazaar in Kashgar, Xinjiang.

Taking wedding photos at the foot of Tianshan Mountain, Hami. CFP

White Wedding Photos

Influenced by cold wind from the North, temperature of Urumqi City in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region dropped to 10 Celsius degree on September 5. The cold air arrived in Urumqi on September 3 and brought rain with it. Although the rainfall was not heavy, the temperature fell drastically.

On September 4, both rain and snow fell on Barkol Grassland of north Hami, Xinjiang. Due to the snowfall, Tianshan Mountain and grassland were blanketed in silver and white. The weather attracted many newlyweds to take the opportunity to capture stunning wedding photos against the background of a rare early autumn snow.

A Long Journey Home

On September 7, sea turtles were placed in special crates by Beijing Aquarium staff for transport to Qingdao City, Shandong Province.

The same day, a farewell ceremony was presented at the aquarium. Two green sea turtles, presented by the Beijing Fishery Administrative Office, recovered after three years of care from experts at the aquarium. Fishery Office and Aquarium officials decided now was the time to return them to the sea, where they can lead a better life.

Farewell party at the Beijing Aquarium. CFP

Tibet Week

The five-day Tibet Week at the Shanghai World Expo ended recently.

With the theme "Heaven in Tibet," the festival included performances of traditional songs and dances, along with exhibitions of other examples of intangible Tibetan cultural heritage and street shows.

Exhibitions featured *Thangka* (a Tibetan painting style using silk and with embroidery depicting Buddhist deities and religious scenes), Tibetan carvings, medicine, sports, and food, just to name a few. Almost 400 singers and dancers took part in performances.

September 5 – Tibet Week concluded. CFP

Record Barefoot Walk

Over 1,000 Chengdu residents hit the streets shoeless on September 4 to set a new Guinness World Record. Guinness confirmed that the 1,141 people, who walked one kilometer, joined to set the new record for biggest barefoot group walk.

The event was organized as part of the Infinitus 2010 World Walking Day (China) to encourage civilians to walk more to maintain a healthier lifestyle.

September 4 – Local residents walk barefoot in the streets of Chengdu. IC

Children's "Graffiti"

Recently, a children's art exhibition, named as "Seeing the Masters — Looking for Freedom" was held at Nanjing Phoenix Art Museum. Works by more than 100 children, aged six to ten years, from a variety of countries, attracted big crowds.

Education experts and artists were invited to communicate with parents. Topics such as benefits of learning art, benefits of studying works by great masters, and how parents should critique their children's work were discussed.

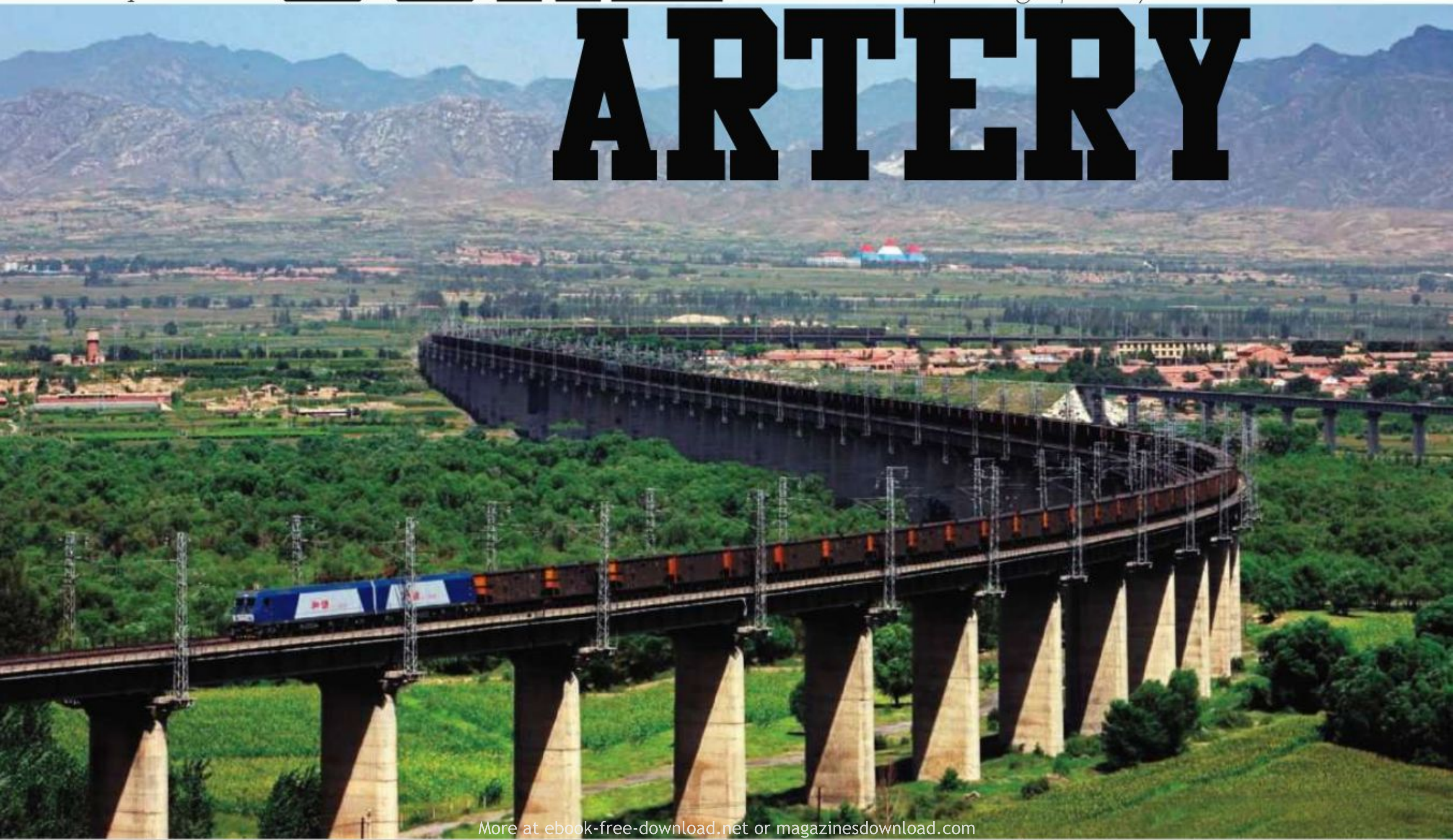
The two-day exhibition also featured a charity auction. All funds will be used to help drop-out students.

Taking a photo with a child's work. IC

Rigid management is part of the recipe for Da-Qin's success.

COAL ARTERY

Text and photographs by Xu Xun


The Da-Qin Railway has become an artery of China's economic development.

Those who study things like coal transportation will find that on a newer map of China, a railway runs through the northern regions like a major artery. The conduit begins in Datong, known as the coal capital of China, goes through the Sanggan River Valley and Yanshan Mountains, and continues all the way eastward to Qinhuangdao Port on the Bohai Sea. This railway does function like the jugular vein when speaking of China's heavy-haulage coal transportation.

Basic Facts

The Datong-Qinhuangdao Railway (known as "Da-Qin" for short) is China's first special electric rail line with two channels for a heavy-haulage capacity. At its western origin in Hanjialing, the railway begins a 653-kilometer stretch running to the eastern seaboard in Liucun of Qinhuangdao and passes through provinces of Shanxi and Hebei as well as municipalities of Beijing and Tianjin. It links Shanxi and Shaanxi Provinces as well as the western part of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which collectively account for 60 percent of the nation's total coal resources. The line is considered such a major artery because it delivers coal from more than 6,000 mining enterprises to China's five major power grids, 380 large power plants, and 10 iron and steel complexes.

Function

Currently, coal is the major energy source in China. The largest coal suppliers are mostly found in Shanxi, Shaanxi, and western Inner Mongolia, and by far the dominant method for transporting it is the railway. Supposing the Da-Qin Railway has an annual transport capacity of 300 million tons, that amount of coal can enable production of 150 million tons of steel or 195 million tons of fertilizer – enough power to supply a year's electricity for 300 million people in China. An annual capacity increase of 50 million tons will add 100 trillion yuan to the national gross output value, the equivalent of a North China power grid or annual power generation in 13.4 mid-sized power plants, each with an installed capacity of a million kilowatt hours.

Growing Capacity

The construction of the Da-Qin Railway commenced in 1985. The first trains began operation in 1988 and the railway finally reached its designed annual capacity of 100 million tons in 2002. A year later, its capacity was expanded to 120 million tons, to 140 million in 2004, and then increased by 50 million tons for each of the next three years. By 2007, it surpassed the 300 million tons milestone. Even amidst the world financial crisis in 2008, the line carried 340 million tons of coal.

In May 2004, the Ministry of Railways decided to restructure the Da-Qin company with a shareholding system. August 1, 2006, marked Da-Qin's initial offering on the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Since the 1950s, heavy-haulage rail transport attracted world attention for its high capacity, high efficiency, and most importantly, low cost.

To comply with interna-

Checking and repairing a CRH train.

Checking components.

Repairing the rails.

The Da-Qin Railway requires considerable electricity.

Copious amounts of coal are transported along the Da-Qin Railway.

tional standards for heavy-haulage transportation, two of the following three criteria must be met: a heavy-haulage train heavier than 8,000 tons; an axle load greater than 27 tons; or annual transport capacity greater than 40 million tons on a railway over 150 kilometers long.

It far exceeds other parts of the world in terms of annual transport capacity for single-line heavy-haulage rails, each with a maximum of around 200 million tons. Today, Da-Qin leads the world in density, capacity, efficiency, and growth.

Technical Innovation

Da-Qin was originally designed to link coal producers in northern Shanxi to the coal wharf at Qinhuangdao, while serving several major power plants with highly-efficient loading, transportation, and unloading using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques.

To keep sustainable growth of its transport capacity, Da-Qin has implemented extensive amounts of equipment and techniques from both China and abroad. Da-Qin's unceasing efforts over the last few years have resulted in remarkable technical innovation, such as synchronized operation, wireless data communication, tow-braking, heavy-haulage organization, optimized operation of heavy-haulage combined trains, and comprehensive maintenance. Many of its accomplishments have been honored by the Chinese government.

This year, as required by the Ministry of Railways, Da-Qin will transport more than 400 million tons of coal – a new world record. The staff of Da-Qin is striving to reach the unprecedented mark by joining hands with related enterprises.

For years, Da-Qin has accomplished a rare level of efficiency, both socially and economically, as well as contributing to alleviate tension plaguing the resource transportation networks throughout China.

Dumping machines unload coal at Qinhuangdao Harbor.

Coal is automatically loaded onto a ship at Qinhuangdao Coal Wharf.

A FESTIVAL OF FIGHTING

Text by Tan Xingyu
Photographs by Chen Jian

Only two years after hosting the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing welcomed another international sporting festival – the SportAccord Combat Games. From August 28 to September 4, 2010, more than 1,000 top athletes representing 106 countries and regions around the world competed in 13 combat sports events, including wushu (Chinese martial arts), boxing, taekwondo, and sambo, as martial arts fever swelled in the Beijing heat.

The ambassador of the SportAccord Combat Games 2010 Beijing, Jackie Chan, hopes to use his international fame to help spread interest in Chinese wushu across the world. ***CFP***

The grand opening ceremony of the Combat Games. CFP

Chinese people are profoundly proud of their most famous homegrown martial art, kung fu, and its practitioners' superb control of technique, both physically and mentally. Whether or not they have ever studied it, most Chinese people can tell you that kung fu is not only great exercise, but extremely effective for self-defense purposes. When the SportAccord Combat Games kicked off in Beijing, many Chinese eyes were opened to the plethora of other martial arts from around the world. In fact, in many countries, martial arts have become favorite sports of the general public.

The Combat Games attracted athletes from 106 countries and regions.

伟志兴体育
WeiZhiXingSports
CPT 康比特
TISSOT
SAMSUNG

Athletes enter the arena. CFP

A winner celebrates his victory

Some anthropologists have hypothesized that ancient martial arts developed as a more effective method of hunting. The basic fighting techniques invented in remote antiquity laid a foundation for modern combat sports. Certainly, frequent warring between primitive tribes further motivated the development of combat techniques, bestowing great respect on a group's strongest, bravest warriors. Throughout its long history, China has developed martial arts of high aesthetic and practical value, both with bare hands and employing weaponry. Chinese martial arts are not only mentioned in historical records dating far back, but also appear in numerous legends and literary works. In recent decades, kung fu movies starring Chinese action stars such as Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, and Jet Li have made big splashes on screens around the world. The movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,* directed by Ang Lee, won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film and popularized Chinese *wuxia* (knight-errant) culture around the globe. These days, martial arts have become an iconic symbol of traditional Chinese culture.

But China is not alone with its rich martial arts history. For instance, Japanese judo, Korean taekwondo, Russian sambo, and Muay Thai have similarly ancient origins deeply embedded in the culture of their founding peoples. However, over the years, different fighting styles absorbed techniques from each other as part of their evolution. During the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Chinese wushu (called *tangshou* at the time) had already been introduced in Japan. Countless martial artists taught wushu in Japan, leaving heavy influence on the evolution of Japanese jujitsu. Russian sambo is actually an amalgamation of several different fighting styles.

The study of martial arts is never limited to only learning combat techniques, but always involves considerable mental training. The arts require strong vitality and perseverance in the face of adversity. Some argue that the Chinese affection for wushu is rooted in the people's longing for justice, freedom and happiness during their endless pursuit for an ideal society. During ancient wars using antiquated weapons, a soldier's mastery of combat techniques could be the key factor to his survival. However, in modern times, war is starkly different, and the allure of martial arts is not limited to the desire for combat skills, but often related to a longing for harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

"Which do you think is more practical? *Sanda* (free combat) or taekwondo?" a Chinese wushu coach once asked one of his students who also studied taekwondo.

"*Sanda*, of course," the student answered, "but taekwondo can help improve my physique, cultivate my courtesy and enhance my personality."

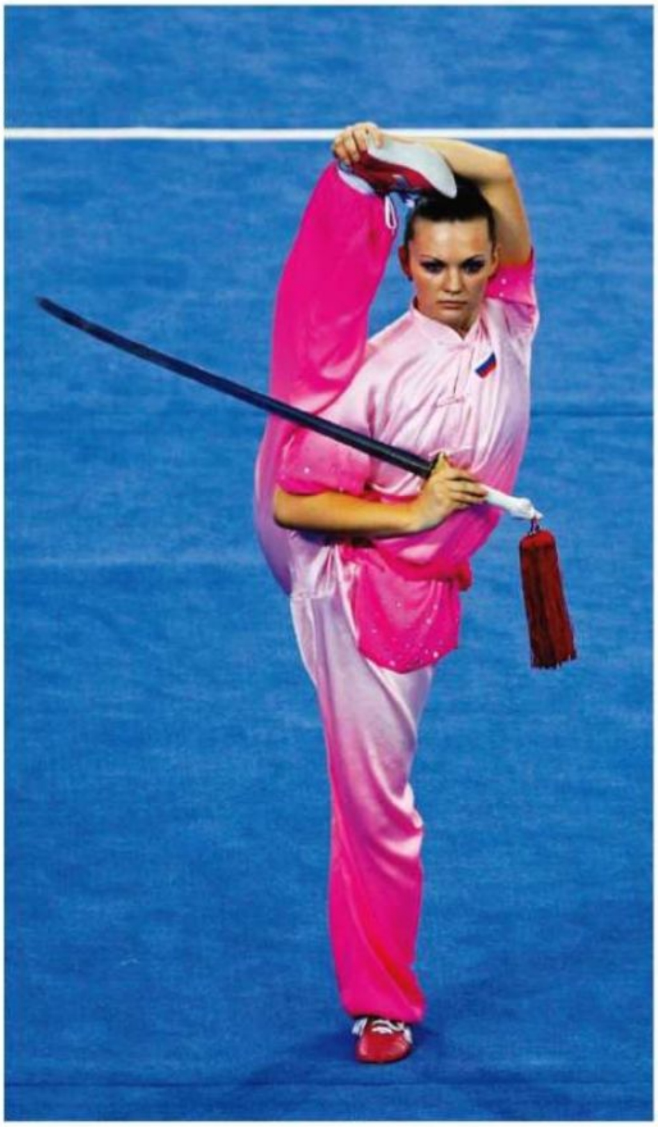
The Combat Games endeavored to bring the world's most popular 13 martial arts styles together in one place, so athletes could share not only techniques, but moral fortitude as well. The event served as a platform for mutual exchange, which enabled never-before-seen development. Despite their varied origins, all combat sports have already transcended the ancient limits of national boundaries. Nowadays, people from anywhere on Earth can choose whatever style they think best suits their individual tastes.

Along with competition of the Combat Games, the event brought a forum consisting of three parts respectively titled "Cultural Connotation of Combat Sports," "Social Value and Contribution of Combat Sports," and "History of Combat Sports and China's Contributions." Five celebrated figures and experts of Chinese and foreign martial arts delivered speeches at the forum. According to Hain Verbruggen, president of SportAccord International Sports Federation, the Combat Games have helped deepen public understanding of combat sports while spreading the philosophy and social value of the arts.

A GLIMPSE OF THE COMBAT GAMES

Text by Tan Xingyu
Photographs by Chen Jian

Experts of 13 combat sports from a variety of countries gathered in Beijing to participate in the inaugural SportAccord Combat Games. This marked the first time so many fighting disciplines were displayed together at a single sporting event. Many of the included events have such a long history of strict protocol that they left many unfamiliar spectators baffled. For instance, whereas in many sports, victory leads to a surge of emotion including yelling, pumping fists, hugging coaches, or waving national flags, kendo winners usually leave the competition area in silence to demonstrate modesty. At times, it's impossible to guess the victor simply by judging the facial expressions of both competitors. But luckily for us, such unique etiquette can lead to fascinating photographs, which *China Pictorial* cherishes.


Russia's Svetlana Zhurkina stretches before competing in wushu. CFP

Wushu:

On August 28, the first day of the SportAccord Combat Games 2010, Jia Rui of Macao, China, walked away with the event's first gold medal for his performance in men's *changquan* (long punch boxing). In total, 47 athletes from 15 countries competed in *taolu* (routine exercises) events. The Chinese National Team captured seven of the 13 available gold medals, and competitors from China's Macao and Hong Kong regions took home three more golds. The remaining three gold medals went to athletes from Iran, Russia, and Indonesia.

Gao Xiaojun, president of the Chinese Wushu Association, was satisfied with the Chinese National Team's performance at the Games. "Chinese competitors displayed remarkable skills and optimum spiritual strength," he remarked. "They helped show the world the endless appeal of Chinese wushu."

"The foreign athletes at the Games are some of the world's best," he added. "We can tell they've been making tremendous progress. This is a major boost to the development of wushu sports. I hope that the Games will help more people understand and admire wushu, while encouraging mutual growth of the art around the world."

Lindswell from Indonesia won the gold medal with 19.40 points in women's combined tai chi boxing and tai chi sword all-round event. Xinhua

China's Qin Qian (right) defeated Yu Song, also from China, in the third round of women's judo open category to advance to the semifinals. Ultimately, Qin took home the gold in the event. ***CFP***

Judo:

Judo, meaning the "way of softness" in Japanese, originated from bare-handed combat techniques developed by ancient Japanese warriors. The object of the sport is to throw one's opponent to the ground. Currently, it is the only Olympic sport that allows an athlete to force an opponent to submit by executing a strangle or choke hold. Judo features fierce bodily contact, but the key to victory lies in a competitor's mastery of skills rather than physical strength.

The Combat Games had two judo events: men's and women's open category. Along with Japanese and Chinese teams, Latvian players also demonstrated remarkable strength in the sport. The Chinese women's team was headed by Liu Huanyuan, a world champion, while the men's team was comprised of mostly younger athletes. In the women's final, Qin Qian from China captured the gold, and in the men's open category, Japanese player Momose Masaru defeated Vladimirs Osnacs of Latvia in the gold medal match.

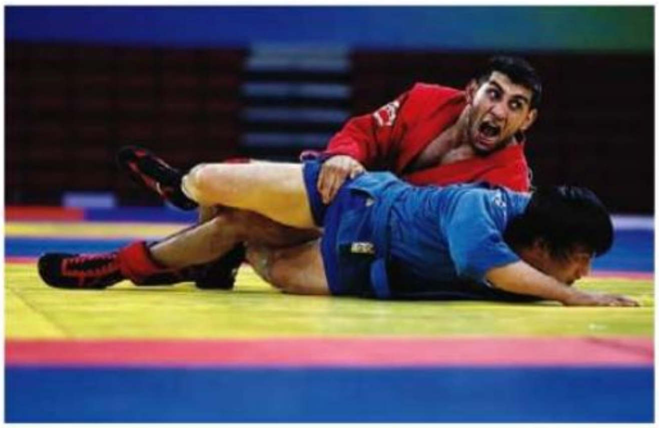
Furious competition in men's judo open category. ***Xinhua***

The fight leaves the ground.

Sambo:

Sambo, which means "self-defense without weapons," originated in Russia, with roots in traditional wrestling. Nowadays, sambo remains required training for military recruits in the country, and maintains significant popularity with the general public. During the Games, the Federation International Amateur Sambo (FIAS) sent its ambassador, Fedor Emilianenko, to Beijing to promote the sport.

Russia has dominated the sport for years, and in the SportAccord Games they took half of six available golds. FIAS President Vasily Shestakov expressed his hope to make sambo an Olympic event, to encourage more athletes from around the globe.



Wrestled to the ground.

Muay Thai:

At the Games, all Muay Thai competitions began with a performance of traditional Thai music. While four musicians with traditional Thai instruments performed, the athletes began the pre-fight ritual by kneeling on the ground, dancing to the music, or pressing their palms to their foreheads. The music continued until the competition concluded. Fighters sometimes adjusted their stances or strategies according to the rhythm of the music. Many insist that Muay Thai competition is not complete without the accompaniment. For this reason, Muay Thai emerged as an unexpected audience favorite.

Considered by many to be the King of Muay Thai, Thailand's Yodsanklai Fairtex displayed his expertise in preliminary rounds to win favor from spectators. In the final round, he faced Russia's Artem Levin. The rivals had faced off on three previous occasions, and Fairtex emerged victorious in two of them. Both are amongst the top players according to the World Muay Thai Council, the international sanctioning body for the martial art. Their match at the Games was considered to be a fight between two Muay Thai kings using amateur rules. Ultimately, Levin prevailed by a score of 3-2 in the final match.

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Even during passionate competition, Muay Thai athletes can appear as if they were frozen in a dance move on a frame of film.

AT A CROSSROADS

– NEW DIRECTIONS FOR CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS

Text by Tan Xingyu

Tai chi boxing is a popular public sport in China. IC

Wushu, or Chinese martial arts (often synonymous with kung fu), returned to the global spotlight with the commencement of the SportAccord Combat Games 2010 Beijing. Chinese competitors exhibited a formidable advantage in the discipline, although they finished second in the medal tally, bested only by the Russian team. More importantly, the athletic event served as an arena for martial arts practitioners from every continent to exchange skills and learn from each other. Beijing Olympics boxing medalist Zou Shiming took home another gold at the SportAccord Combat Games. "The sports meet brought together all of the best hand-to-hand combat styles," Zou remarked. "While sharing something in common, each event has its own unique traits, so athletes could always gain valuable insight from their rivals and from watching other events."

In some ways, the SportAccord Combat Games served as a martial arts barometer, measuring the development of each of the many fighting styles.

Wushu's Olympic Bid

Presently, the Olympic Games are the largest, most comprehensive global athletic event, and whether or not wushu could be added was a heavily debated topic in the years leading up to Beijing's hosting. Ultimately, the legendary fighting style made an appearance at the 2008 Games, but only as a demonstration, leaving many kung fu aficionados disappointed.

Now, the recent SportAccord Combat Games have renewed discussion of the topic. At the inaugural ceremony of the new event, renowned kung fu movie star Jackie Chan sang the theme song of the Games, while extending his wish that wushu will be added to the Olympics, and fellow big screen martial artist Jet Li continued his efforts to help tai chi "pushing hands" to become an official Olympic sport. "I'll keep working even if it takes 20 years," he stressed.

However, in the eyes of Wang Xiaolin, secretary general of the International Wushu Federation (IWUF), there is still a long road ahead in the fight to add wushu to the Olympic roster, due to myriad issues. Internally, he explains, Chinese martial arts can be divided into a plethora of schools and sects, so it would be a daunting task just to formulate a set of rules that could be accepted and followed by the wide variety of practitioners. Externally, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has renewed a commitment to keep the size and cost of the Olympics in check. Jacques Rogge, IOC President, clearly stated that only when some events are eliminated can new ones be added.

Even within Chinese martial arts circles, a variety of opinions have been voiced. Some scholars believe that Olympic inclusion would only be beneficial in promoting Chinese martial arts to the rest of the world, and that blindly forcing the sport onto the Olympic roster, while overlooking its historical and cultural significance, would only degrade the form. Other critics cited the jujitsu competition at the SportAccord Games in which competitors' exaggerated movements often appeared humorous to the uninformed spectator, inspiring tumultuous laughter along with roaring applause. Perhaps many amateur viewers have a hard time deciphering the difference between jujitsu and judo, but most of the audience remained clearly engrossed by the event. There is little debate whether the Olympics would popularize the sport, but the argument lies in what the ultimate impact on the millennia-old art would be.

Status Quo of Chinese Martial Arts

Of the diverse events included in the Combat Games, those falling into the wushu category proved to be the biggest draw. A native sport of China, wushu is an ancestor of many modern fighting styles, and its traces are still visible in techniques seen in other events. In the host country of China, its native son soaked up much of the spotlight.

Although the Chinese team earned most of the gold medals in wushu events, its work could not avoid criticism. According to a Xinhua News Agency commentator, China merely added a game in which it has an obviously huge advantage, before warmly inviting others to join. The official press agency of the Chinese government also quoted a statement from an officer of the Wushu Federation of Malaysia: "The focal point of the popularization of Chinese martial arts is worldwide development. With this in mind, China should demonstrate the manner of a great nation. Athletes of other nations would be disheartened if China takes all the wushu gold medals at international competitions."

However, the comments provoked objections from some Chinese martial arts experts. Although the Chinese team won most of the gold medals in wushu forms, in both *taolu* (routine exercises) and *sanda* (free combat), both athletes and coaches admitted surprising pressure from their foreign rivals, whose progress in recent years was remarkable. "Wushu is on the rise overseas," notes Huang Yingqi, combined tai chi boxing and tai chi sword all-around gold medalist. "Foreign athletes are quickly catching up with us."

Zhang Genxue, general coach of the Chinese National Sanda Team, expressed similar feelings. "China has no inherent advantage in the free combat event," he stressed. "Our achievements are hard-earned, since the physical stature of athletes from Europe and Southwest Asia is naturally better than ours." The increasing global popularity of *sanda* has resulted in improved performance both at home and abroad, leaving uncertainty as to whether the Chinese team can duplicate its lofty scores in future competition.

A Sumo-Sized Question

Of the Games' 13 events, six came from Japan and one from South Korea, testifying to global recognition of martial arts from the two nations. In recent years, China has begun various efforts to promote its traditional martial arts abroad, but still lags behind Japan and South Korea in the world popularization of SportAccord combat methods.

Sumo is considered by many to be the national sport of Japan. In its native country, the sport involves a strict set of ritual elements and regulations, which sometimes prevent athletes from other cultural backgrounds from practicing. However, after the traditional Japanese competition made its way to Europe in the 1990s, it gained speedy popularization on the continent. According to Stephen Gadd, general secretary of the European Sumo Union, 80 percent of the gold medals at the Sumo World Championships went to Europeans. The internationalized form of the event, known as "athletic sumo," simplifies etiquette and rules to make it much easier to learn. At the SportAccord Games, European participants bested their Japanese rivals to take home seven of the eight available gold medals. "Even when our athletes know little about Japanese culture, they can still perfect the necessary skills for athletic sumo," explained Russian sumo head coach Gennady Kaletkin. "Russia has a rich wrestling tradition, which contributes to our good scores in sumo."

In contrast to the "simplification" approach adopted by sumo, aikido went global while keeping its distinct characteristics. Since its inception, aikido has always embodied the "integration of man and nature," while discouraging confrontation and conflict. Such traits enriched the sport to the point of making it a pure cultural symbol, attracting those who attach more importance to spiritual accomplishments. It was through a simple publicity brochure that aikido ambassador to SportAccord, Lydia la Rivière Zijdel, familiarized herself with the discipline before quickly falling in love with it. According to her, promotion of aikido primarily happened through voluntary efforts, which, over time resulted in more than 2 million worldwide fans of the "low-profile" sport. Aikido still endeavors to abandon contention while promulgating its cultural ideals.

Both the internationalization strategy of sumo and the popularization method of aikido serve as good references for Chinese martial arts. As Xinhua argued, the current situation is not ready for juxtaposing exciting competition with cultural magnificence, and the question remains whether to pursue economic benefits or cultural diffusion. Chinese martial arts seem to be at a crossroads, but choosing the right path will never be as simple as black and white.

A wushu amateur learns from a Taoist master at Wudang Mountain, which is considered the birthplace of tai chi boxing. ***CFB***

Today, wushu is offered as an elective course at some Beijing primary and middle schools. ***CFB***

Unforgettable Village

—Tangmo Greeted by French Politicians

Text by Wang Yongqiang and Zhang Jianping
Photographs by Zhang Jianping

A waterfront street scene. CFP

Few understood why major politicians from the other side of the world came to visit a small, little-known village in central China. The lawmakers were world-renowned, hailing from France, one of the major cradles of European civilization.

Last June, former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin paid a private visit to a millennium-old village in Anhui Province, following an April 2007 tour by Valery Giscard d'Estaing, former president of France and then President of the European Parliament.

The ancient village, which attracted two of France's most powerful leaders in the last four years, is known as Tangmo. Hidden in the Huizhou District of Huangshan City, Tangmo is one of the best-preserved ancient villages in Anhui. About 1,400 years ago, the village's forefather, a man named Wang, planted three ginkgo seeds on three patches of barren land, and the location of the only one to sprout was where Tangmo would begin to bloom. Wang decided to establish a village on the site, and the ginkgo has been revered by villagers of every generation since. After extensive construction based on careful planning during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, Tangmo emerged as the most representative garden village designed with feng shui principles in Huizhou. The gateway pavilion at its entrance is the best-preserved of its kind in China. Along with this, the memorial archway erected by a Qing merchant to celebrate the acceptance of two of his compatriots into the Imperial Academy is preserved intact, as well as the ancient Gaoyang Bridge.

Upon entering Tangmo Village, visitors witness streets paralleling winding rivers, leading to nearly 100 Anhui-style residential houses lining both banks, along with various shops selling all kinds of necessities. Lacing the main street is a 40-meter-long roofed corridor featuring "beauty bench," a traditional reclining chair, on which pedestrians can rest and peer across Tangan Stream, free from concerns about sun or rain. Near the corridor, senior men clean muddy lotus roots and women wash clothes in the water, without disturbing the ducks and geese frolicking in the stream. Occasionally a few farmers herd cattle across the street. Together, the scenes compose an intriguing picture not unlike an elegant ink and wash painting, reminiscent of the street scapes recorded centuries ago.

If not for Wang Yan, CEO of Sina.com, this ancient village might have remained unknown to all Europeans, let alone major officials. In May 2005, Wang paid his first visit to Huizhou, where the enticing natural landscapes and the historical and cultural glamour immediately captured his heart. His passion was fueled even further upon arriving in Tangmo. Here, the president of one of China's leading web portals was astonished by the beauty of the village, which he likened to a classical garden. Later, he extended a special invitation to the French embassy staff and some French journalists to visit Huizhou.

The historical legacy and a peaceful aura of Tangmo struck a chord with the French diplomats, and because of reports from the initial visitors, Raffarin and Giscard

Strolling through Tangmo.

After visiting Tangmo, Giscard d'Estaing brushes two Chinese characters meaning "very good."

Former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin greets a child in the roofed corridor.

Former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and his wife in Tangmo.

d'Estaing came soon after. D'Estaing is even said to have attached great importance to the trip. Six months before his visit, he began to learn the Chinese language and practice calligraphy. While in Tangmo, he conversed with villagers in Chinese and brushed two Chinese characters meaning "very good" before leaving.

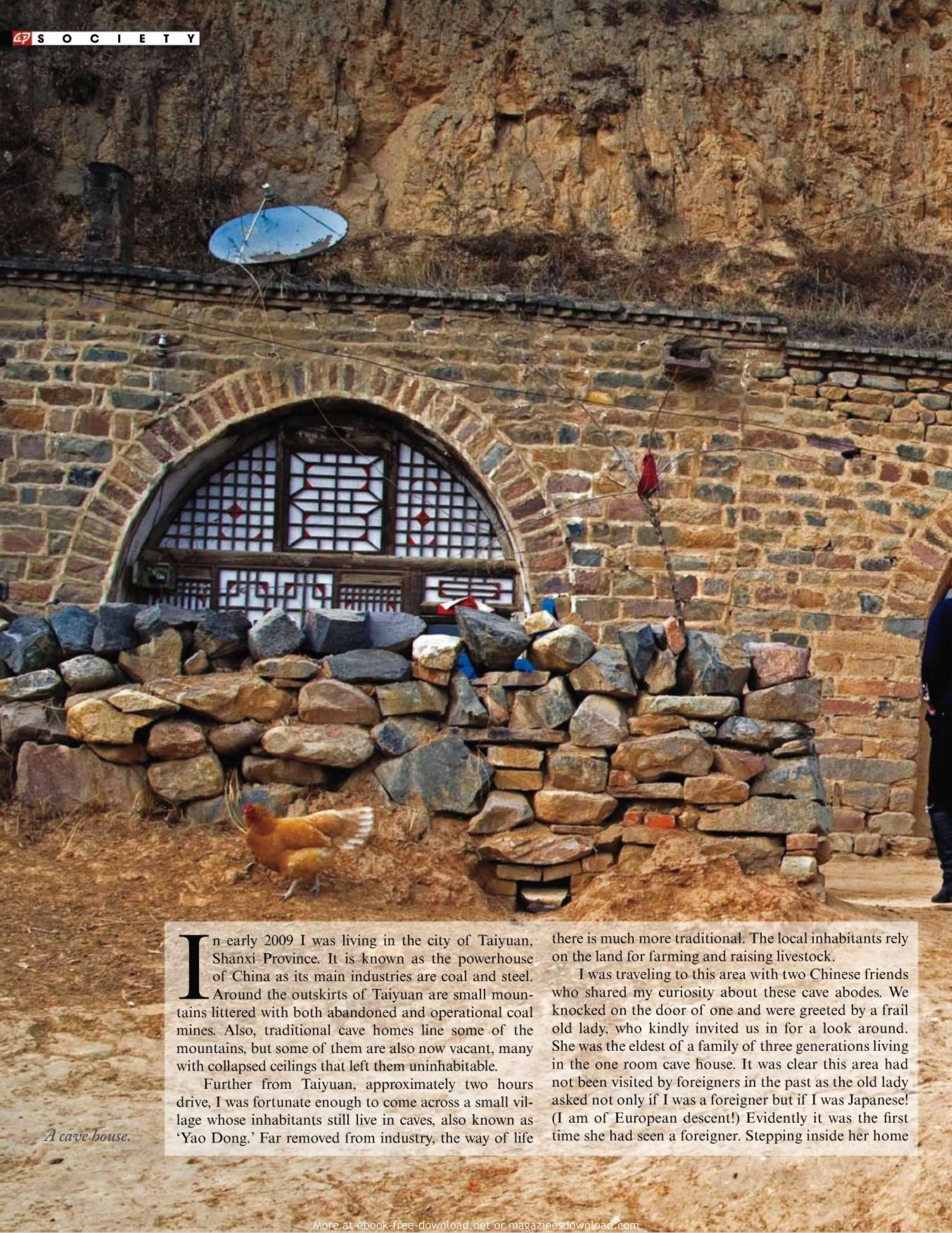
Raffarin was filled with similar emotions. "I really wish I could stay and live here for a while," he remarked. Even after returning to France, he wrote back to the town: "China's Tangmo is one of the world's most beautiful villages. Thank you for your friendly and warm hospitality … A common goal of both China and France is to build a world of harmony."

These senior statesmen must have an impressive world travel resume, but their special fondness for this ancient village demonstrates a high regard for the legacy of Chinese civilization.

The roofed corridor provides a convenient resting place. ***CFP***

A millennium-old ginkgo. ***CFP***

Shadi Pavilion, dating to the reign of Qing Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722), is the landmark structure at the entrance to Tangmo Village. ***CFP***



A cave house.

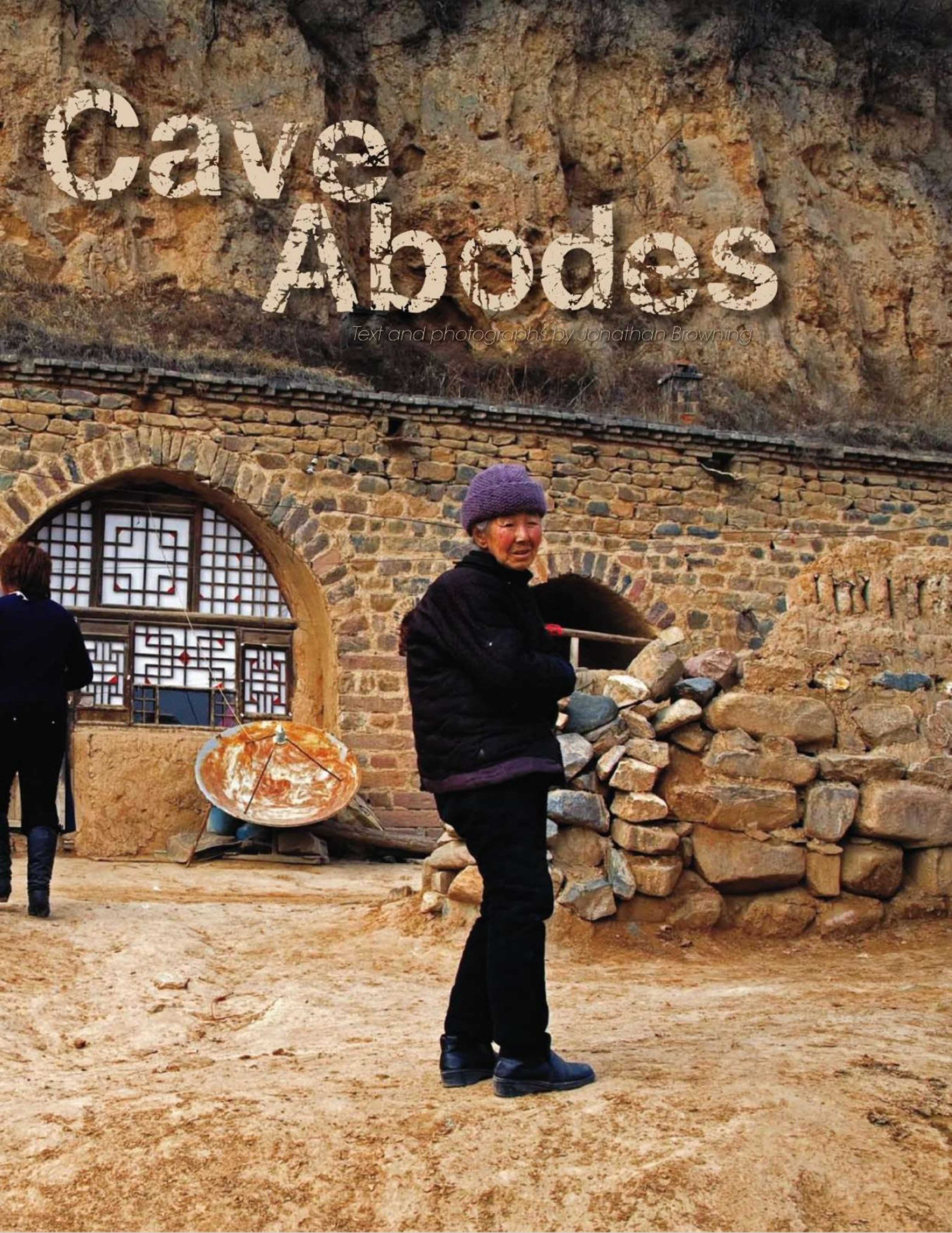
In early 2009 I was living in the city of Taiyuan, Shanxi Province. It is known as the powerhouse of China as its main industries are coal and steel. Around the outskirts of Taiyuan are small mountains littered with both abandoned and operational coal mines. Also, traditional cave homes line some of the mountains, but some of them are also now vacant, many with collapsed ceilings that left them uninhabitable.

Further from Taiyuan, approximately two hours drive, I was fortunate enough to come across a small village whose inhabitants still live in caves, also known as 'Yao Dong.' Far removed from industry, the way of life there is much more traditional. The local inhabitants rely on the land for farming and raising livestock.

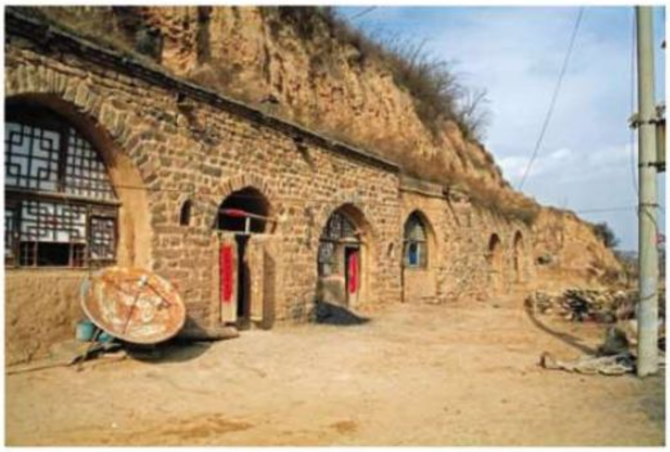
I was traveling to this area with two Chinese friends who shared my curiosity about these cave abodes. We knocked on the door of one and were greeted by a frail old lady, who kindly invited us in for a look around. She was the eldest of a family of three generations living in the one room cave house. It was clear this area had not been visited by foreigners in the past as the old lady asked not only if I was a foreigner but if I was Japanese! (I am of European descent!) Evidently it was the first time she had seen a foreigner. Stepping inside her home

Cave Abodes

Text and photographs by Jonathan Browning



Cave houses.



Children at play.

A local woman wrapped up gazing down the hill.

was like stepping back in time. Old furniture was placed here and there, dated posters peeled off the walls, a wall clock told incorrect time, and various other bits of paraphernalia that you would expect to see in an antiques shop decorated the living space. The dimensions of the cave were surprisingly big as it extended into blackness of the cliff, the far end serving as a storage place for grain, tools and food. Between the main living area and the storage area was a simple kitchenette separated by a large wardrobe acting as a wall. The most prominent item in the cave was the large bed in which all the family sleeps. It was actually a large stone and brick structure with a simple mattress on it. Below the bed was a wood burning stove. This functions as the family's oven and as the heating unit for the entire home. In winter, Shanxi can reach a bitterly cold minus 20 degrees. With it directly underneath the bed, the stove warms them for the entire night while keeping the room above 10 degrees during the day. In fact cave houses are some of the most ecological and environmentally friendly homes that exist. Heating is minimal in winter as it's naturally insulated by meters of stone. In summer it is cool. And rent isn't an issue.

Unfortunately the family did not speak standard Mandarin, making it virtually impossible to communicate with us. They were, however, very hospitable and poured us hot tea and offered the bed to sit on and chat. The husband of the elderly lady, looking even frailer, entered the home during our stay and was equally surprised to see visitors. Despite the cave house having below average living conditions, it still seemed very cozy and the atmosphere between the family members was one of tranquility and happiness. I met the youngest generation, a young girl who was on holiday from the local school. She was the only child, and I could tell she was very close to both her parents and grandparents. She had an interest in English, as could be seen from the alphabet posters on the walls. Despite being very shy and nervous, she enjoyed the opportunity to share some words in English. During that time, the other family members came and went getting on with little chores, and the grandfather remained indoors seated on the bed rolling a big cigarette with some home grown tobacco and newspaper.

Around the cave house there was not much else. Above it were fields where they grow crops, either side were their neighbors', in front was a large valley where concrete buildings stood and a few small factories could be seen in the distance. More immediately in front of the cave house was a small area of land for rearing pigs and chickens. The family also had a German shepherd as their guard dog that roamed around outside. It had to be tamed by the grandmother before we could go back outside because it was really aggressive to strangers.

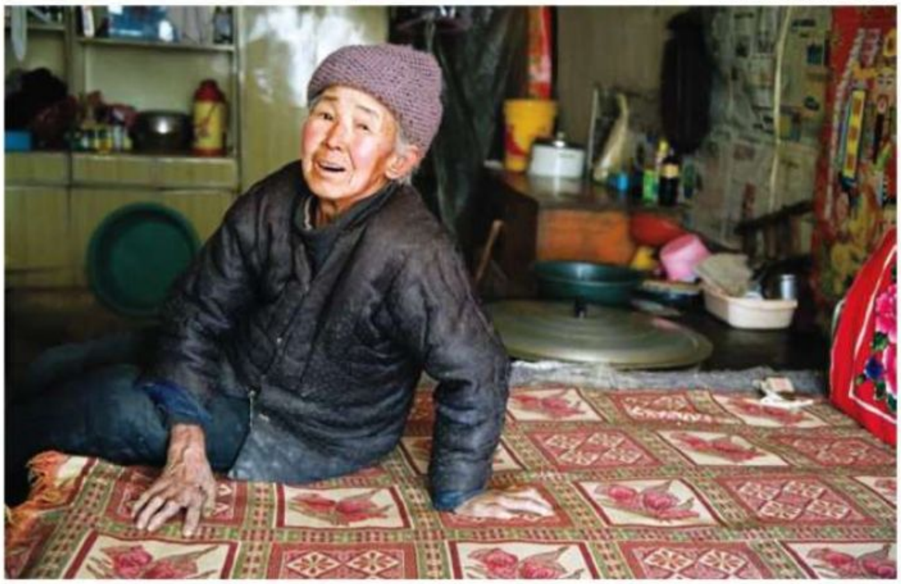
After saying goodbye to the family, I felt very lucky to be able to see this way of very traditional living that stills exists in an ever increasingly modern China. If I have the opportunity I would like to go back and further explore the region and other dwellings of a similar nature.

Outside the cave with her guard dog.

The old lady in the mirror.

Sun shines through the front window.

The old lady sits on her bed in the cave house.



The Modern Face of the Ancient Yi

Text and photographs by Fronny Chen

The traditional folk culture of the Yi people, a 2,000-year-old ethnic group from southwestern China, has yet to oxidize despite its constant exposure to modern civilization. Much of its cultural heritage, including Yi-language sutras, tricolor lacquerware, music, and dance, remains identical to originals, attracting many anthropologists from afar to Yi villages to conduct research. In many of the scientists' research notes, they describe Yi people as having "tall stature, muddy faces, curly hair, hooked noses, and white teeth." Whatever their outward appearance, these people have created and preserved a remarkable history and civilization.

Other visitors also devote considerable time and energy to studying traditional Yi culture before heading to Daliang Mountain, a secluded area of Sichuan Province primarily inhabited by the Yi.

Rap Music at Torch Festival

Upon my arrival in Xichang, capital of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, virtually every local resident I came across reminded me not to miss the Yi dance drama, *Fire and Totem*. "The drama concentrates the deepest passions of the Yi people," some remarked. "Yi ethnic costumes look even more gorgeous and sublime under the stage lights. Many local girls now see the lead actor as a sort of Prince Charming."

Actually, traditional Yi elements are not so dominant in Xichang. Torch Square's avant-garde design and the bird's-nest-like art center add striking modernity to the city. Also, *Fire and Totem* features choreography introduced from Beijing. So, those who haven't seen it have reason to doubt how many Yi elements it preserves and showcases. However, most doubts quickly dissolve when the performance begins. The show's plot is simple: One day, a son is born to a Yi family, who soon wins favor of the sun warriors. Then, the boy becomes a sheepherder, and becomes enamored by a local girl he meets while watching his flock. They communicate with each other through song, and eventually fall in love. After enduring a test of fire, the boy ultimately grows into a brave warrior.

Despite its simple narrative, the drama demonstrates virtually every detail of the genuine Yi lifestyle. For instance, some Yi elders never cut their hair; in order for a Yi priest to chant sutra, several instruments including a bamboo hat, fan, felt robe, and fortunetelling cask are required; Yi wine used to celebrate New Year is kept in exquisite tricolor (red, yellow, and black) lacquer bottles; Yi girls sew their wedding gowns by hand…

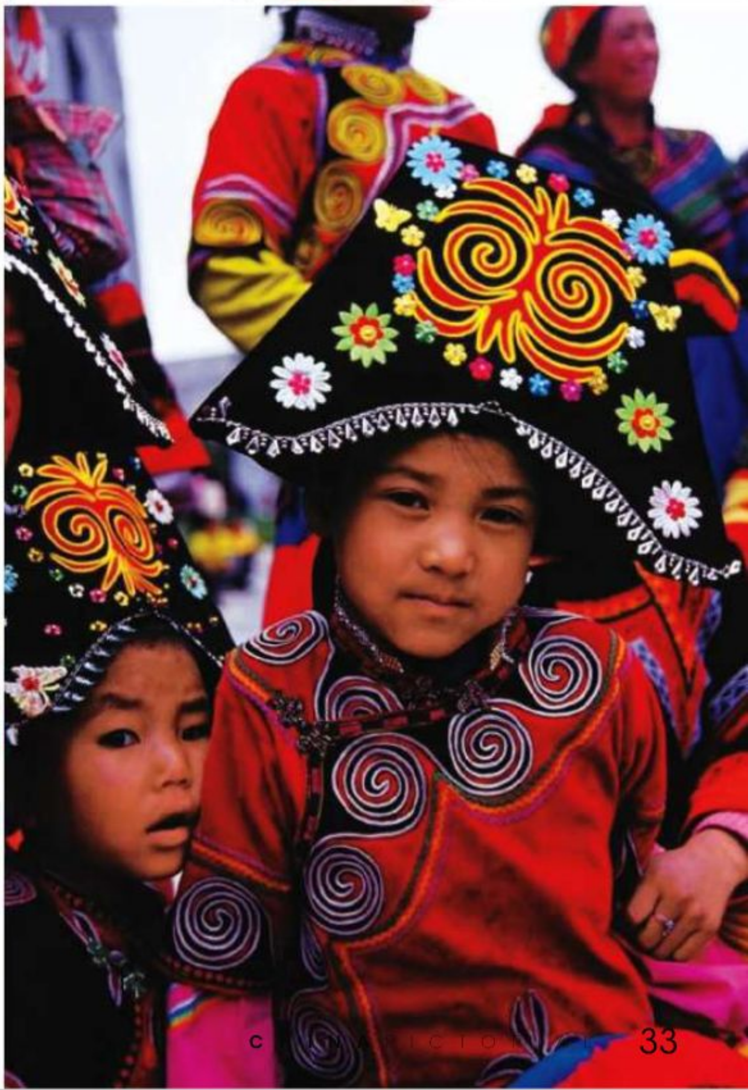
Surprisingly, contemporary elements such as modern dance and electronic music are exquisitely incorporated into the dance drama, without diminishing any of its timeless appeal. At one point, a young actor dressed in traditional Yi costume begins rapping in Yi language, and much of the audience begins to rap right along with him.

I was lucky enough to catch the show on what happened to be New Year's Day according to the Yi calendar, and most of the audience members were locals. "The performance is appealing even for locals who see Yi dance often," declared a Yi man sitting next to me. "But, it must be even more stunning for spectators from Beijing."

Tricolor Lacquerware

Visitors to Daliang Mountain should be careful not to get too drunk when the locals welcome guests with their wine. Along with intricate drinking routines handed down with each generation, the Yi tableware associated with wine is also special. Black-lacquered bowls and bottles accented with pristine red and yellow geometric patterns are an indispensable element of local drinking culture.

Yi people in Liangshan still don traditional ethnic costumes.



Dubbed the Home of Lacquerware, Xide County is also a favorite destination for anthropologists and archeologists. In recent years, countless visitors have been lured there by the ancient craft that dates back more than 1,700 years. In the 1990s, many of the county's households founded workshops to produce lacquerware. Gradually, machines replaced outdated manual tools, but production techniques remain as ethereal as before. Timber comes from birch and azalea trees due to their resistance to warping and cracks. The pigments are produced from natural vermilion, pyrite, and sumac mucilage, which add luster to the finished product while remaining non-toxic. Drawing the decorative patterns requires superb skill, and designers never pre-draft their designs, but rather begin drawing directly on the body of an item. Even so, it usually takes five days for an experienced craftsman to finish drawing on a single dish. In Xide, an ordinary painter earns about 1,000 yuan a month, which enables local youth to afford a comfortable life designing lacquerware, rather than wandering to large cities to look for backbreaking work for dismal pay, like many youngsters from surrounding counties do. "Ten years ago, when only a single muddy road connected the county with the outside world, many backpackers still came here on foot to purchase lacquerware," a local craftsman recalls with confidence. "Today's greatly improved transportation has substantially increased demand for our products and given them viability in the marketplace."

Since ancient times, Xide has been an important economic hub of South China's trade routes. Nowadays, lacquerware factories have popped up in Xichang as well as Xide and Zhaojue counties. Debating which region's lacquerware is most popular is irrelevant. The point is that the public recognition of the gifts from Yi culture has enabled the bloom of traditional Yi crafts in the modern age. The perpetuation of a culture's millennia-old tradition is a greater distinction than the construction of any museum could bring.

Azalea Blossoms

"Liangshan's most beautiful annual moment occurs when azalea blossoms carpet Luoji Mountain," locals insist. Typical alpine flora of the prefecture, azaleas blossom from late spring through early summer. Its only rival

Yi children in traditional ethnic clothes pose for a group photo.

beauties are Yi girls. During the Torch Festival, a traditional summer Yi celebration, each village simultaneously holds a beauty pageant to crown the year's "Golden Azalea."

The tradition has continued for an estimated 3,000 years in Liangshan. Almost every part of the pageant is natural, with meadows as a stage, blue skies for a backdrop, and banks between crop fields serving as the seating area for spectators. Of course, the Yi use their own criteria to judge beauty: Bright eyes and a kind heart are the most important features.

The most notable beauty contests are held in Puge and Butuo counties. On the day of competition, hundreds of girls anxiously gather from every corner of Liangshan. They dress in traditional Yi costumes, which take their mothers a year to construct, while holding yellow cloth umbrellas, and dancing with members of their respective clans or villages. In contrast to modern beauty contests held elsewhere, the festival lacks complicated rules, participant quotas, celebrity judges, and large prizes. Along with displaying physical beauty and talent, contestants must also demonstrate good temperament and intelligence. Many of the judges are over 70 years old, and they often consider moral reputation a crucial trait of a winning contestant. The winner of a beauty pageant will understandably receive more betrothal gifts than runners-up. Winning a contest sometimes leads to good employment opportunities outside of secluded Daliang Mountain. Mahei Ayi, a Golden Azalea of 2002, is a notable example.

When she attended the local beauty contest, Ayi was just 15 years old. After winning the title of Golden Azalea, Ayi was accepted to the China National Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble in Beijing. Over the following five years, she starred in movies and TV shows, and appeared in commercials as spokeswoman for many products. Now, her life is not unlike other movie stars. Her blog receives heavy traffic and her photos are increasingly popular to download on the internet.

While some scholars believe that the prefecture should remain isolated to preserve authentic Yi culture, Ayi disagrees. "Seclusion and underdevelopment are not the keys to preserving the purity of Yi culture," she argues. "Some visitors take photos of dilapidated earthen houses of poor Yi families and then display them in luxurious museums. Our miserable existence became something to entertain city-dwellers. It should go without saying that we don't like to spend our lives in such earthen dwellings, and most are eager to touch the outside world and work towards a better life."

Perhaps for this reason, a Yi boy named Ji Jie appeared on the television competition *Super Boys* (similar to *American Idol*), hosted by Hunan Satellite TV. Millions of Yi people from Liangshan sent text messages to support him, and some were so poor that they had to borrow cell phones to do so. In doing this, they reiterated a common theme of the new modern Yi culture: No matter how primitive their culture is, the people long for respect and recognition from the outside world.

Some Yi scholars can still read classics written in the ancient Yi script.

Yi cuisine is popular with both locals and tourists.

Art Imitating Art

— The Rebirth of Tang Tricolor

Text by Li Houxiao
Photographs by Li Hao

A high-nosed, deep-eyed man of minority ethnicity, with a dense beard and bare chest, humbly pulls a thoroughbred to its owner, reaching out for reins, which seem to have disappeared over the ages, dissolved into dust. The horse, featuring a neatly combed mane and robust frame, appears to be neighing for viewers enjoying the piece of art. At Tang's Treasure Studio, a workshop-based museum in Nanshishan Village of Luoyang, Henan Province, this awe-inspiring imitation of Tang Tricolor (Tang Dynasty pottery with dominant colors of yellow, white and green), nearly a meter tall, caused one visitor to gasp with astonishment upon seeing its price tag — a figure equivalent to that of a German luxury sedan!

Though it is a superbly crafted modern reproduction, the tri-color pottery figurine gives viewers' imaginations free rein to the glorious civilization of the Tang (618-907). Authentic period tri-color pieces are glazed pottery figures found buried with nobles and high-ranking officials of the Tang, and are not sold publicly because of their historical and cultural value. Therefore, a production and distribution base for imitations of Tang tri-color pottery, as well as those of other types and dynasties, emerged in Nanshishan, a village nestled on Mt. Beimang.

Nanshishan began to reproduce clay antiques as early as a century ago, when nearby railway construction unearthed an ancient tomb complex. Among the numerous cultural relics found there, clay antiques imbued with an-

"A certain knack is needed to create products
that closely resemble the real thing,"
explains Gao Shuiwang.
"The secret is not as simple as the antique finish.
Ancient techniques must be strictly adopted in each step,
to stay as close as possible to the old environment."

Two glowing horses are visible from the mouth of the kiln.

A worker refits a Tang tricolor imitation before firing it in kiln.

cient Greek and Gandhara styles sparked particular interest with collectors. While restoring damaged items, villagers of Nanshishan gradually grasped stylistic techniques and began to produce imitations. In 1956, the Archaized Art Studio, a public-private partnership, was established in the village, bringing an age of prolific production of pottery imitations. In the 1980s, Nanshishan became a major producer of national gifts, with more than 50 of its tri-color horses and camels presented by state leaders, including Deng Xiaoping, to heads of other countries.

Over the last decade, the art market for mass-produced Tang tri-color pottery became saturated while the more individualized collection market gradually emerged, so village family-based workshops began popping up to cater to demand for archaized clay figurines in a wider variety of styles from different dynasties. Today, visitors to Nanshishan Village will see characters, meaning "archaized" and "high imitation," highlighting the gates and walls of many residential compounds. It is from these rural compounds that countless tri-color handicrafts and pottery imitations are born before finding their way into the antique markets across China and eventually to the furthest corners of the globe.

Gao Shuiwang is a leader among the village's artisans imitating Tang tri-color pottery. His finishing technique is so convincing that the final product can hardly be distinguished from the genuine article. When a group of his pottery figurines of the Northern Wei (386-534) style were displayed at Beijing's Panjiayuan Antiques Market in 1994, they were mistakenly purchased by experts from the National Museum of China and the Palace Museum (Forbidden City) as cultural relics, sparking a sensation among collectors who immediately started a buying spree.

This enabled Gao to establish a business of his own, Jiuchao Antiques Reproduction Factory, whose signboard currently occupies the village's most conspicuous location. Gao himself rarely appears in the factory, leaving administrative duties to his brother-in-law, Manager Wang. All products, both finished and semi-finished, are marked with unique serial numbers, and each employee is paid by the piece. "Due to the financial crisis, our numbers were down this year," Manager Wang admitted. "Fortunately, the materials we use, such as clay,

Clay molds ready for firing.

Glazing requires exquisite craftsmanship.

water, firewood, and pigment, are all easily accessible local products, and employees are local villagers, so we can readjust our workload and control costs according to market situation." Even while illustrating his point, Wang was busy directing workers to cautiously load and transport the ethnic horseman piece to the buyer.

"A certain knack is needed to create products that closely resemble the real thing," explains Gao Shuiwang. "The secret is not as simple as the antique finish. Ancient techniques must be strictly adopted in each step, to stay as close as possible to the old environment."

The first step for pottery reproduction is to shape the clay figure. While the approach used for human and animal figures is molding or direct sculpting, other objects require a pottery wheel. Wheel-forming brings few technical requirements other than accurate dimensions, but human and animal figurines usually require real objects for reference. Nowadays, intact prototypes are impossible to procure, so artisans are left with only photos, museum exhibits, or individual collections to consult. According to Gao, very few of his fellow villagers have yet to master molding, so they often invite skilled sculptors from the outside.

After the clay mold is shaped, it is thoroughly dried in shade before an unglazed firing, which requires a high temperature and a lot of time. Then, the figure is glazed and fired again — in low temperature and for a shorter time. The stove, chamber, and chimney of the kiln are all connected, and temperature fluctuations require considerable manual attention, increasing necessary manpower to avoid wasting resources on inferior products.

Unearthed ancient glazed pottery tends to lose its bright surface color after centuries of underground ero-

A traditional bun-shaped kiln ensures a genuine resemblance to the Tang tricolor originals.

An artisan places pottery figurines into a kiln for firing.

A clay tri-colored figurine in production.

The first step for pottery reproduction is to shape the clay figure.

Customers select from a variety of tri-color choices.

An exquisitely crafted set.

sion, so hydrofluoric acid and alkaline metals are often used to remove the brilliant luster of the new glaze. Nanshishan villagers like to place imitation pieces outside their household workshops, allowing them exposure to sunshine, rain, and grass. Sometimes, pieces are laid out for as long as decades, while their owners patiently wait for their value to increase with age, conscious that deterioration leads to a closer resemblance to originals.

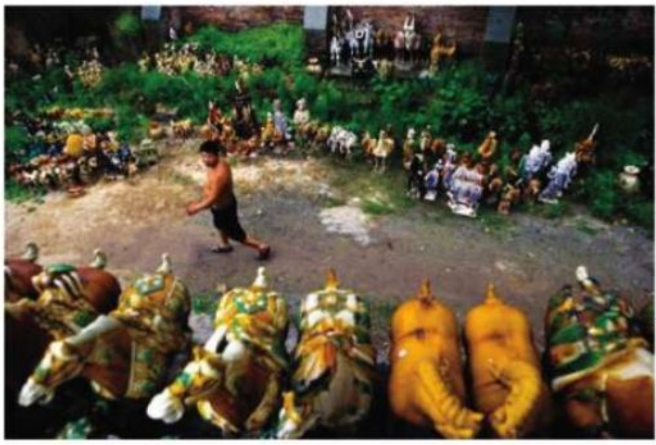
Along with surface processing, clay composition is another important factor in the quality of the imitations. Research shows that earth in the peripheral areas of Nanshishan was popular for ancient pottery, including the tri-color objects discovered at the site of a Tang Dynasty kiln near the village. Before being molded, the dirt experiences a series of procedures such as selection, pounding, elutriation, sedimentation, rubbing, and staling.

"It's never easy to craft a superb imitation," stresses Gao. "Few creators pay attention to the details. As you can tell, it's difficult to find excellent imitations in our vil-

lage." Indeed, nearly all nearby courtyards are stocked with Tang tri-color pottery, but most items are of lower-than-average quality.

At present, Gao is working to recreate the legendary "drinking horse" famously described in historical documents, as well as planning to ask authorities to help establish a tri-color pottery creative industrial base on farmland outside the village. "I will not allow pottery craftsmanship, especially tricolor, to be lost in my generation," he insists.

Not far from the village workshops, golden wheat sways in the breeze across vast farmland extending beyond the horizon. In a few days, reaping machines will arrive to collect the crops. For many years, Nanshishan has benefited from mechanized agriculture, from sowing to harvest. "The cost of reaping is equivalent to buying the crops," Gao grins, "but we still need to fulfill our duty as farmers rather than letting the land go to waste, or else others would laugh at us."



Finished imitations are laid outside to allow deterioration from exposure to sunshine and rain in hopes of a closer resemblance to originals.

A line of finished pottery figurines.

From Trend to Trade

Offerings of Loo-moo, Shanghai's metal toy capital.

Niche Markets Become Trendsetters

Text and photographs by Li Guoqing

Trends are not so much about fashion as they are about business.

In late August of this year, I travelled to Hangzhou and Shanghai to meet the owners and founders of several original brands and shops. Both cities seem to be particularly trend-setting as the birthplaces of many original brands which have quickly expanded in the ever-changing marketplace. I believe the root of these brands' success lies in the patience of their owners. With innovation and a profound understanding of marketing principles, these entrepreneurs have transformed the passion of their personal interests into profitable businesses.

After decades of influence by its American and Japanese counterparts, the native Chinese trend industy has taken its own unique shape in recent years, but hasn't yet produced global names. Recently, Guangzhou's trends have undergone tremendous change. Several original brands quickly burst into prominence only to disappear soon thereafter. These failures have been attributed to several common problems plaguing the nation's fashion industry such as misallocation of capital, lack of brand continuity, and ineffective marketing. Most glaringly, marketing channels for creative products are limited. A minor sales slump will cause tremendous strain on a small enterprise's limited resources, which inhibits new product development and often bankrupts the brand. When I illustrated my opinion of this problem on my microblog, it triggered a heated discussion amongst industry insiders. Opinions were exchanged concerning related topics such as product research, competition, lack of media attention in the Chinese market, and widespread availability of counterfeit products.

I once carefully studied Tokyo's trendy Harajuku area. Its lasting success has been largely attributed to cooperation between competing brands, such as collaboration between Hiroshi Fujiwara, Jun Takahashi, and Tomoaki Nagao. I took my recent trip to Hangzhou to attend the opening of the new Wulin Road branch store of CHOC, an original Hangzhou brand. Coinciding with the first anniversary of CHOC's founding, my own brand, iTOYZ, celebrated its second birthday. To mark the occasion, we joined to produce a limited edition T-shirt and threw a party for other original brands from Guangzhou and Hangzhou such as LTES+ and Punch Line, as well as Hong Kong's Fury Animals. CHOC's target demographic is younger females with "cute" tastes. Similar to the Japanese brand BAPE, CHOC's management structure is more suitable for China. After only a year, the brand has four stores in Hangzhou and Suzhou and has redefined the development model for trendy Chinese brands. The brand's new Wulin Road store is situated in the trendiest and most expensive women's fashion area in town. The bold move hopes to help the brand grow from niche to mainstream. Wei Chao, CHOC's chief designer, has clearly stated his aim to move the brand into the mass market.

Designs of the trendy brand Suck UK.

Fans eagerly awaiting the grand opening of a new CHOC shop.

Meanwhile in Shanghai, Hong Kong pop star Edison Chan turns his focus to Julu Road after already making Changle Road a local trend center. My good friend Eddi, founder of adFunture, the world's first artistic toy brand, also moved his operation to Shanghai recently. Although usually busy developing toys, Eddi found the time to open two adjacent shops, ICONIC-1 and Select Shop, on Zizhong Road near Shanghai's renowned Xintiandi area. One shop features his and his friends' brands of products such as T-shirts, toys, glasses, accessories, and bags, while the other offers special editions of Adidas, Nike, and other big-name sneakers that are seldom seen on China's mainland. The early success of the two shops is already turning heads in Shanghai's trend scene, where it was once agreed that trendy shops could only thrive on Changle Road. They provided a new model for trend expansion, demonstrating that shops in traditional areas featuring classical *shikumen* buildings can thrive.

Loomoo, outside Henglong Plaza on Shanghai's Shaanxi North Road, is a collective shop for trendy brands. The store's operator, Leon, who was among the first group to bring Lomo to Shanghai, has shifted his focus to product design. His shop sells products such as diaries, Suck UK accessories, Original Fake toys, Playsam wooden car models, and products from Takashi Muradami and Yoshitomo Nara. Loomoo is responsible for introducing dozens of excellent designers to Shanghai consumers and is already a trend-setter amongst Shanghai's trendiest.

The industrialization process of trendy products is a key issue that must be addressed by prospective entrepreneurs. The birth of a trendy brand is usually rooted in personal interests, and sprouts from a niche market. Without a clear vision, long-term planning, and the ambition to transform a hobby into marketable products, brand owners can easily fall victim to the increasingly competitive marketplace. Only when interests evolve into real businesses — with innovation to attract youngsters — can the trendy niche industry compete with mainstream giants of the fashion industry.

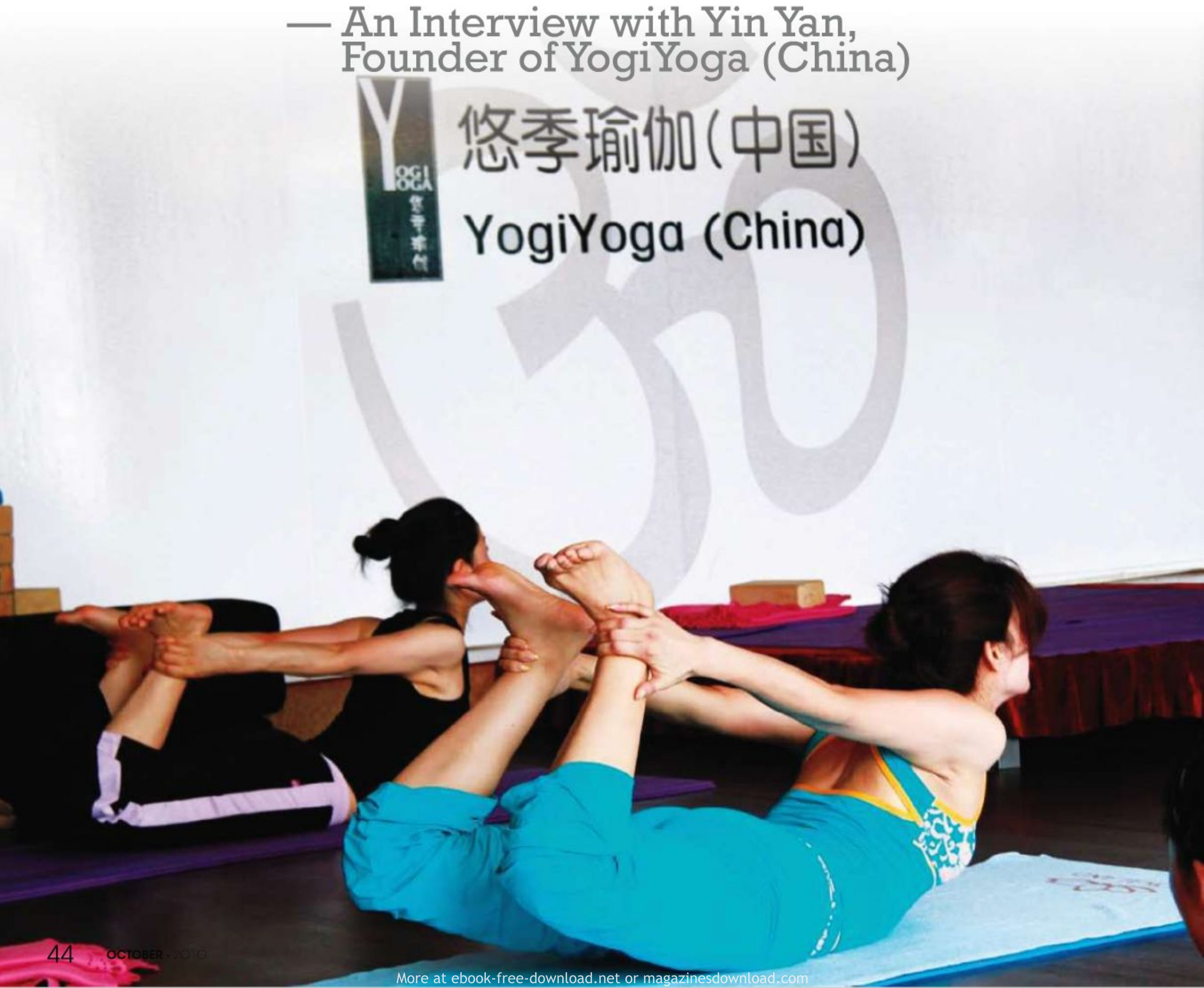
Designs from ICONIC-1.

Pure YOGA

— An Interview with Yin Yan, Founder of YogiYoga (China)

Text by Liu Xiulan
Photographs by Dong Fang

The pleasant autumn breeze blowing away the heat of another sweltering Beijing summer marks the seventh anniversary of the founding of YogiYoga (China). Over the years since its inception, Yin Yan, founder of the studio and a leader of the yoga business in China, has endured many ups and downs. Not long ago, *China Pictorial* interviewed Ms. Yin at her studio.



Yin Yan, founder of YogiYoga.

China Pictorial: First of all, congratulations on the seventh anniversary of the founding of your studio! What goes through your head when tracing your footsteps since YogiYoga was established in August 2003?

Yin Yan: Thank you. What's on my mind is that every step I took was linked to core ideals. When I quit my job as editor-in-chief of *Elle China*, I became busier than ever with YogiYoga, which has given me a better sense of achievement – far beyond measurable financial gains and bubble reputation. There is no greater calamity than being consumed by greed. These seven years have taught me that my career should serve my personal growth instead of devoting all of myself to my career.

CP: How would you summarize the past seven years in one sentence?

Yin: I appreciate all the setbacks.

CP: What's your plan to celebrate your seventh anniversary?

Yin: My team is working on it. I've been pondering our primary direction, which changes every year as our business moves on.

The aim for this celebration is to entertain my team and all YogiYoga members with things such as an awards ceremony. I can hardly imagine where I would be today without them. We are lucky to have more sponsors today than before for the celebration, which is more professional and market-oriented. I'd like to use the celebration to showcase and foster interaction with a brand-new lifestyle.

CP: There are many Yoga studios in Beijing. What's your brand's advantage?

Yin: First, YogiYoga is an enterprise that provides professional services.

Second, it is not simply a yoga studio. My hope was to share the most authentic yoga from India and to make yoga in China more professional. Over the last few years, I've immersed myself in many campaigns, such as publishing books on YogiYoga, providing professional training, and organizing regular lectures by top yoga masters. It's all for the good of the industry rather than for our company's financial statements. Money is not everything. What matters more is to use the limited funds on the most meaningful endeavors.

Third, I take pride in my team, which is composed of highly-experienced professionals and teachers, like Yogi Mohan. It's a dedicated and sincere team of pure yoga. My team and I feel blessed.

Finally, we have built a chain consisting of studios, franchises, publication, and training.

It's just the beginning of YogiYoga.

YogiYoga offers professional instruction for every trainee.

Era of “Created in China”

— An interview with CSR President Zheng Changhong

By Chen Biao and Zhu Huiyue

In front of the China Railway Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai Expo, a seemingly endless queue of visitors waits for a chance to take a photo with a locomotive used to equip the world’s fastest EMU (electric multiple unit) train. Designed for a maximum speed of 380 kilometers per hour (236 mph), the train is the fruit of recent efforts by China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock Corporation Limited (“CSR” for short).

Thanks to CSR’s innovation, many technical bottlenecks that once inhibited China’s railway development are history. By combining the introduction and absorption of foreign technology with independent innovation, CSR is now a front-runner in China’s high-speed rail industry. “We’ve ushered in the evolution from the ‘made-in-China’ era to a ‘created-in-China’ era,” declared CSR President Zheng Changhong in a recent interview with *China Pictorial*.

A high-speed CRH train produced by CSR bolts past historic monuments.

CSR President Zheng Changhong.

"No country on Earth, except for China, could invest such a huge sum and accomplish such fast development."

China Pictorial: US President Barack Obama mentioned China's high-speed railway industry in the State of the Union he delivered earlier this year. Could you talk about the future of the high-speed railway industry in China? What role will CSR play in its development?

Zheng Changhong: Presently, low-carbon and energy-conserving concepts prevail around the world. All countries, including China, are seeking greener transportation. High-speed rails are one green means of transport characterized by high efficiency, zero emissions, energy conservation, and overall environmental friendliness.

China has already invested a huge amount in the development of high-speed railways. So far, the nation has constructed 6,552 kilometers of high-speed rails, more than any other country in the world. According to China's medium and long-term plan for railway network construction, by 2012, its high-speed passenger lines will reach 13,000 kilometers in total. In fact, the figure is a conservative estimate according to the latest release from the Ministry of Railways. By the time the goal is achieved, China will have formed a nationwide high-speed railway grid comprised of four longitudinal lines and four latitudinal ones. Presently, the nation has 400 high-speed EMU trains in operation. According to the ministry, the figure will increase by 2,000 by the 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015).

Rail transportation is now witnessing rapid growth throughout the world, creating a wealth of opportunity for large railway equipment manufacturers like us. Presently, supply of high-speed EMU trains has fallen short of demand. As a leading high-speed locomotive manufacturer, CSR now provides more than 70 percent of China's high-speed railway products. CSR endeavors to create a professional and innovative image for itself and become a front-runner in China's CRH (China Railway High-speed) train manufacturing as well as a trend-setter in the international high-speed railway industry.

CP: It is estimated that by 2020, more than 27,000 CRH trains will be operating in China. This is a tremendous growth point for CSR. In the future, what other economic growth points will CSR see?

Zheng: Since Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao set building a green, low-carbon society as a national goal, that has been the greatest growth point for China. In addition to energy-conservation and environmentally-friendly high-speed locomotives, CSR is also committed to the production of high-power, AC-driven diesel locomotives, electric locomotives, and subway trains. The diesel locomotives we develop and manufacture together with the United States' General Electric Company (GE) are environmentally friendly, with emissions reduced by at least 30 percent. Also, CSR applies green technology in its new-energy businesses, such as wind power and electric automobiles.

Now, CSR is the third largest enterprise of its kind in the world, and we believe it will climb to first by 2012. This is because few companies like us have capacity to produce 100 high-speed EMU trains a year, and few countries like China demand 100 high-speed EMU trains

中国南车股份有限公司
中国外运股份有限公司
物流战略合作框架协议签字仪式

CSR and Sinotrans sign a strategic cooperative agreement.

annually. Each year, the Ministry of Railways purchases nearly 1,000 diesel and electric locomotives, 1,000 passenger trains, and tens of thousands of freight wagons. They invest 100 billion yuan in railway equipment annually. Additionally, as a necessary solution to reduce pressure on urban transportation, the demand for light rails and subways doubles every year. No country on Earth, except for China, could invest such a huge sum and accomplish such fast development. More than 50 foreign countries have contacted the ministry, hoping to purchase Chinese high-speed EMU trains. All of these areas will become new growth points for CSR.

"Over the past six years, we've been working around the clock."

CP: In May 2010, the Chinese-made 380 kph CRH locomotive, the world's fastest train, was unveiled. It will begin operation on the Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway in 2011. What path has CSR walked in terms of technological innovation?

Zheng: CSR has grasped core technology with respect to high-speed locomotive development and production, while building a platform for high-speed train design, manufacturing and testing. Like I said before, CSR has followed a path from absorbing foreign technology to the genesis of independent technological innovation. The year 2004 marked the debut of high-speed railways in China. That year, China began introducing high-speed rail technology from multinational giants such as Bombardier, Alstom, Siemens, and Kawasaki Heavy Industries. Then, in 2006, the first Chinese-made high-speed CRH locomotive with a speed of 250 kilometers per hour rolled off the production line of CSR's manufacturing base in Qingdao City. On April 18, 2007, China launched its sixth railway speed acceleration, for which CSR supplied 47 CRH trains, accounting for more than 90 percent of all CRH trains in operation. CSR made the bold move of forming a systemic development platform for high-speed locomotives and further upgrading its design and manufacturing technology.

Later, we began to independently develop high-speed CRH trains with a maximum velocity of 300-350 kilometers per hour, which eventually rolled off the production line in December 2007. Currently, our new 380A EMU is under development for the Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway, and an experimental train now runs at night on the Zhengzhou-Xi'an Railway to test its performance, aerodynamics, traction, safety, and comfort. The experimental train is equipped with nearly 1,000 sensors, each of which transfers information instantly to the control system. It has been proven that the faster the train runs, the safer it is. Our superiority over our market competitors lies in our rich experience in high-speed train testing,

December 26, 2009: Several CRH trains just off the assembly line at CSR's Wuhan manufacturing base are ready for delivery.

operation and maintenance.

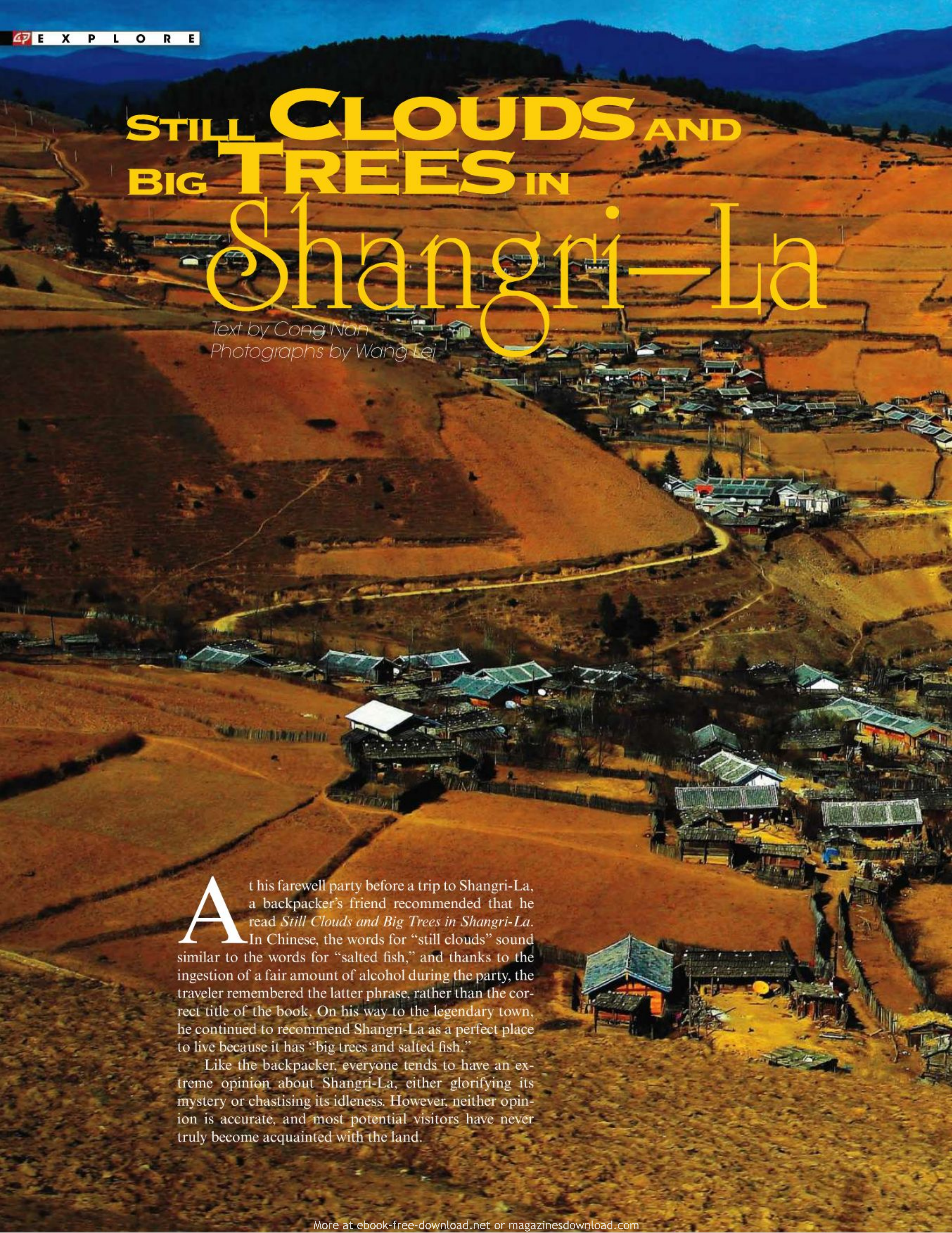
Over the past six years, we've been working around the clock. Many of our employees devote themselves 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some engineers often work daily until midnight. It is common for our employees to sacrifice vacation, even during the Spring Festival which is regarded as the most important holiday in China. Since the very beginning, we've practiced the so-called "1:3 Concept" with introduction of advanced technology. That means that for each one yuan of introduced technology, we invest three yuan to absorb and upgrade it. We've invested a huge amount in laboratories and testing equipment because the development of high-speed EMU requires continual experimentation. A total of 10,000 scientists and technicians including more than 20 academicians, as well as 14 research institutions, including Institute of Mechanics and Institute of Computer Science under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, participated in our high-speed EMU project. Some foreign experts have noted that in the past six years we've completed jobs that took them four decades. This is because we've been able to finish three or even five days' work in a single day.

Currently, our products have been exported to more than 40 countries and regions around the world. In 2009, our overseas orders increased by 60 percent from the previous year. Nowadays, overseas orders contribute 10 percent of our revenue, and the figure is expected to grow to 20 percent in the near future. In the past, CSR mainly exported train parts, but now we focus on exporting assembled trains, of which 70-80 percent are high value-added locomotives, EMU trains, and subway vehicles. Our market share has grown consistently. If high-speed trains are allowed to be exported, they will testify to the popularity of "created-in-China" products in the international market.

On November 17, 2009, when US President Barack Obama visited China, the Ministry of Railways signed a cooperative agreement with GE, according to which the two parties agreed to strengthen cooperation in the US high-speed railway project with a designed velocity to exceed 350 kilometers per hour. The United States intends to introduce high-speed railway technology just like China did a few years ago. In 2009, when he visited China, US Secretary of Commerce Gary Faye Locke commented that a century ago China exported railway laborers to the US, but now it exports railway technology. Indeed, we've realized the evolution from the "made-in-China" era to the "created-in-China" era. We're proud that we've made our own contribution in nudging China towards a new era of high-speed railway transportation.

(Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of CSR)

Wind power has become a new growth point for CSR.



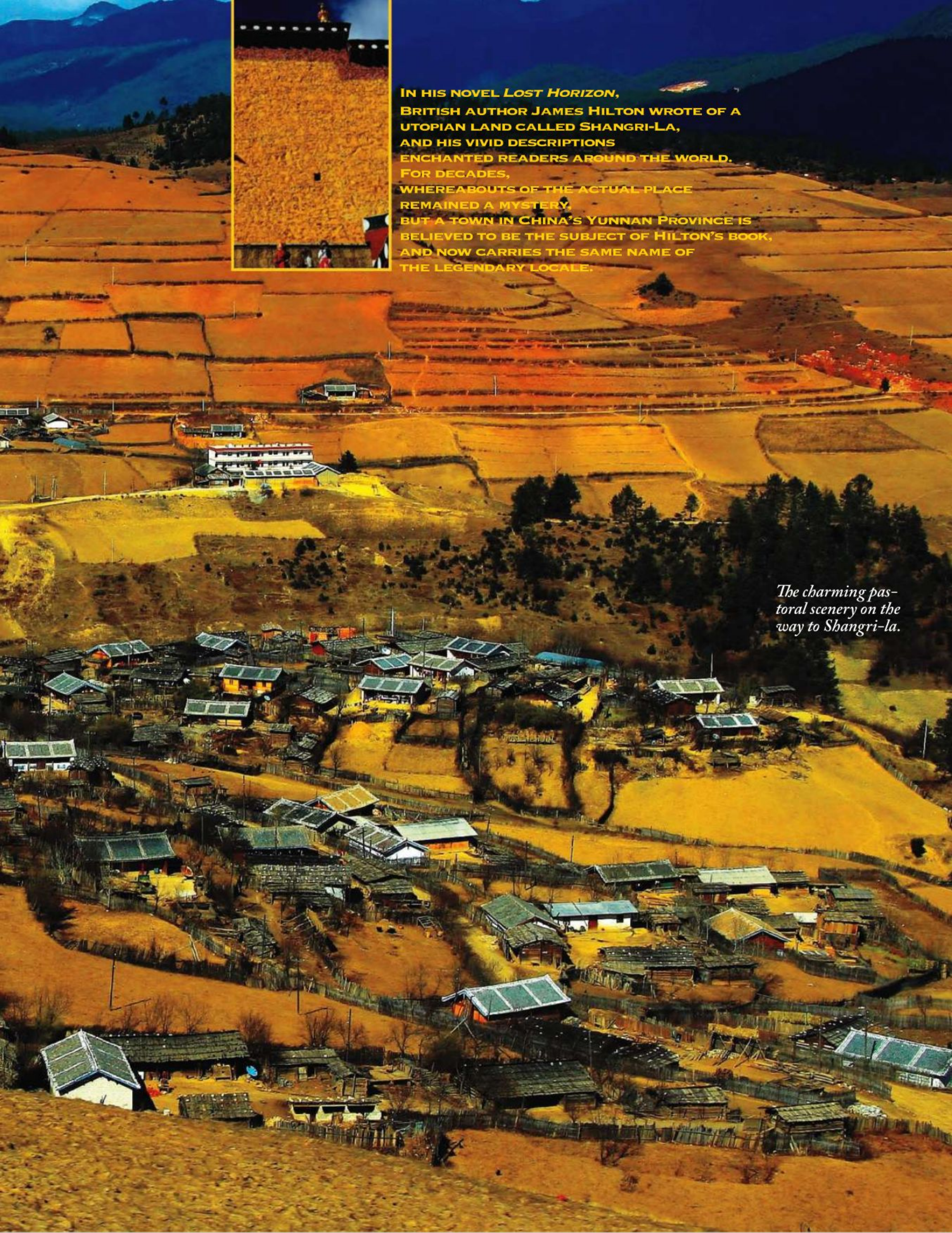
STILL CLOUDS AND BIG TREES IN Shangri-La

Text by Cong Nan
Photographs by Wang Lei

At his farewell party before a trip to Shangri-La, a backpacker's friend recommended that he read *Still Clouds and Big Trees in Shangri-La*. In Chinese, the words for "still clouds" sound similar to the words for "salted fish," and thanks to the ingestion of a fair amount of alcohol during the party, the traveler remembered the latter phrase, rather than the correct title of the book. On his way to the legendary town, he continued to recommend Shangri-La as a perfect place to live because it has "big trees and salted fish."

Like the backpacker, everyone tends to have an extreme opinion about Shangri-La, either glorifying its mystery or chastising its idleness. However, neither opinion is accurate, and most potential visitors have never truly become acquainted with the land.

In his novel *Lost Horizon*, British author James Hilton wrote of a utopian land called Shangri-La, and his vivid descriptions enchanted readers around the world. For decades, whereabouts of the actual place remained a mystery, but a town in China's Yunnan Province is believed to be the subject of Hilton's book, and now carries the same name of the legendary locale.



The charming pastoral scenery on the way to Shangri-la.

Shangri-La at First Sight

For most, Shangri-La refers to Shangri-La County of Diqing Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, formerly known as Zhongdian County. Some more liberal explorers choose to include locales in the surrounding area as part of "Greater Shangri-La." Regardless, the small county near the borders of Yunnan, Tibet, and Sichuan remains the core destination for most travelers.

One of the most iconic images of Shangri-La is the Meili (Meri) Snow Mountain. Upon arrival, many visitors quickly jump on a bus to visit the sacred hill. For them, their journey can only continue after first seeing the landmark.

Overlooking Meili Snow Mountain.

A young monk. by Cong Nan

Meili Snow Mountain often inspires more formal wordage in its visitors, due to its magnificence. Leisurely travelers often enjoy sitting in Migrant Bird Pub, which faces the mountain, to view the sunrise. Rays peeking through the clouds tend to gradually illuminate the mountain. When the highest peak, known as Kagebo, finally appears, the scene is often breathtaking. It's no surprise that some tourists joke that after seeing such a spectacle, returning home immediately would cause no regret.

However, to see Meili clearly, a little bit of luck is necessary. Some wait days while it hides behind thick clouds, while others are fortunate enough to see it when they arrive. According to locals, Meili only shows its face to the kind-hearted, so those who report seeing it are looked upon with warmer light. While most may shrug off the compliment, many are mesmerized by the seeming personality of the mountain.

Influential Monasteries

Ganden Sumtseling Monastery, the largest Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Yunnan, is another must-visit when coming to Shangri-La. The monastery bears a striking resemblance to the Potala Palace, which won it the nickname Lesser Potala, so it's no surprise that it is an important structure to the entire Tibetan area. The stunning monastery is a treasure chest of Tibetan religious culture. With its plentiful Buddha statues, the monastery attracts believers from throughout Yunnan and beyond. Although it retains an aura of peace, the constant flood of tourists and worshippers keep it bustling much of the time. When sitting on the stairs of the monastery, looking down at the twinkling lamps below, many visitors claim to understand the allure of Shangri-La that inspired such a famous novel.

Along with Sumtseling, the area contains several other monasteries worth visiting. Feilai Monastery is near Meili Snow Mountain and adjacent to Yunnan-Tibet Highway, covering only 1,500 square meters. Throughout its 400-year history, the monastery's location amongst the mountains has blessed it with a tranquil environment. At first sight, Feilai may look like a typical Tibetan structure, but unlike most others, it contains only a single main hallway, smaller than those in many monasteries. The magnificence of Meili Snow Mountain towering over it further dwarfs the human-made landmark.

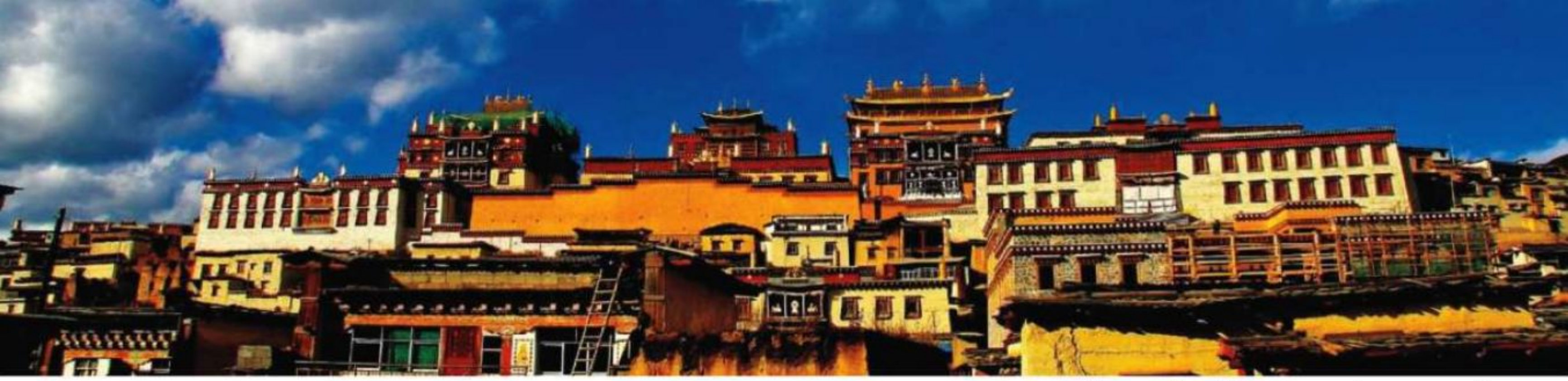
Regardless of its small size, Feilai is exquisitely built and finely crafted. Like many other Chinese temples and monasteries, Feilai's origin and construction is legendary. It is said that the site for the monastery was originally chosen at a place two kilometers away. On the night before construction started, all the building materials mysteriously disappeared. The abbot dispatched searchers, who finally found everything resting at the present site, with beams and pillars already erected. Locals believed the new site was chosen by the gods and thus built the monastery there.

Trudging Through Yubeng Village

At the altitude of 3,200 meters, Yubeng is the highest village on Meili Snow Mountain. Accessible only by foot, the village has little communication with outside world and thus is believed by some to be the true Shangri-La.

Most tourists heading to Yubeng start at Xidang Village. The trip from Xidang to Yubeng is almost entirely composed of steep grades. The trail is comprised of muddy mountain roads developed by caravans and pilgrims. When it rains, the blurring and muddy trail is almost impossible to scale. The slippery slopes make the downhill journey difficult as well. Adventurous visitors are awed as they hike through primeval forests, but minutes later, they may be trudging through deep mud.

It goes without saying that a local guide is necessary to make the trip. A guide can provide horses to help with luggage. Climbing the mountain roads is similar to Robert Conway's journey, as depicted in *Lost Horizon*. To reach the real Shangri-La, one must explore. After the journey, most visitors are plagued by sore legs, even the most experienced mountain climbers. At Yubeng Village, the other side of Meili is finally visible, so visitors can witness Mingyong Glacier. Although the glacier is not ex-



Sumtseling Monastery, the most well-known monastery in Shangri-la.

actly clear or smooth, it is the closest humans can get to the top of Meili Snow Mountain. To this day, no one has ever scaled the summit.

In the village, you will find Yubeng Sacred Waterfall. Folklore describes the water as coming from heaven. Some believe that a shower in the waterfall provides purification and rejuvenation, both mentally and physically. The beautiful waterfall resembles a white *hada*, a piece of silk often given as a gift in Tibetan culture, and not surprisingly is a popular tourist draw.

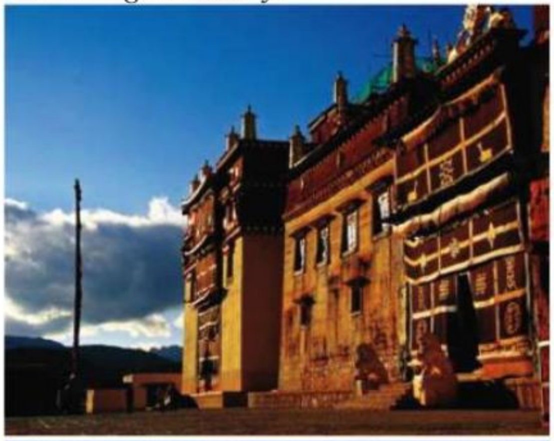
Wise Men in Shangri-La

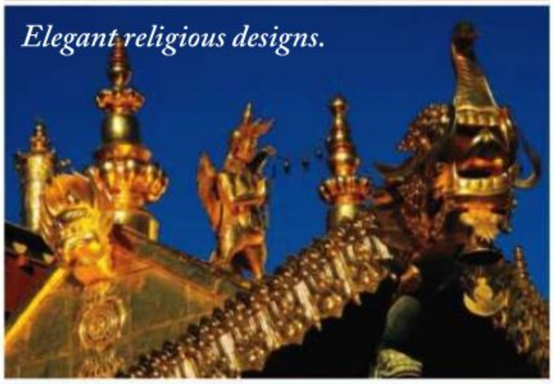
Since changing its name to Shangri-La, the formerly little-known Zhongdian County has enjoyed a steep rise to fame. The change was primarily to help tourism development, saving travelers the trouble of guessing where to go. However, most locals consider ancient downtown of Shangri-La to be the true jewel of the fabled county, for its time-honored structures and genuine residents.

When the sun goes down over the square of Shangri-La ancient town, locals in plain ethnic costumes begin to dance and sing. There are no dazzling light shows there, and the performances are spontaneously organized by locals, rather than prepared for tourists. This natural energy can quickly spread to all those around. Some outsiders are quick to join the dancing group.

A good portion of the dancers are elderly. While many tourists express envy for those from a land of such idyllic beauty, some locals scoff at their home's new fame since the name changed. "When Zhongdian was its name, the place was already very beautiful," one local explains. "For people like me who have been living here their whole life, they don't care about the name. Shangri-la is a name for outsiders, but we still call this place Zhongdian."

Sumtseling Monastery.





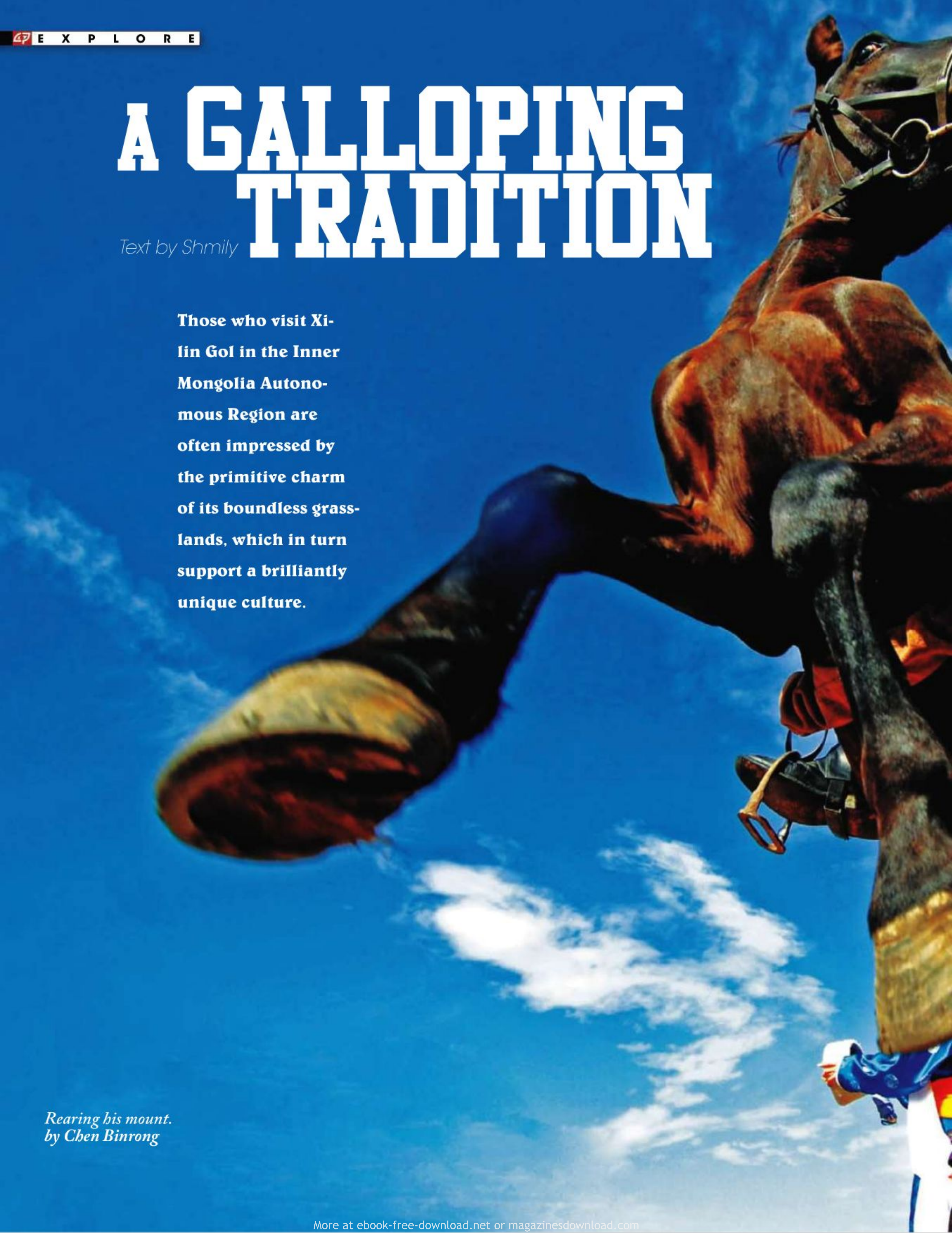
Elegant religious designs.

Blue Moon Valley at Shangri-la. On the mountaintop of the scenic area, tourists can see several sacred mountains of Tibetan culture, including Meili and Yulong Snow Mountains.

A GALLOPING TRADITION

Text by Shmily

Those who visit Xilin Gol in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region are often impressed by the primitive charm of its boundless grasslands, which in turn support a brilliantly unique culture.



Rearing his mount.
by Chen Binrong

Ovoo – Stone Piles

Ovoos are Mongolian stone piles used for worship. The most famous Ovoo is believed to have been built in 1753, and consists of 13 parts, representing the 13 heavenly keepers of horse herds, a legend most popular during the Liao Dynasty (916-1125). Every year, a grand sacrificial ceremony is held on the 13th day of the fifth lunar month, during which lamas blow giant horns and chant Buddhist sutras, while herdsmen dressed in their best circle the stone piles three times, praying for good fortune and a promising future by presenting a *hada*, a piece of white silk, or piling more stones for favorable weather, bumper harvests, and thriving husbandry.

The festival also presents an opportune time for youngsters to court the opposite sex. In the bright sunlight, young men and women participate in a variety of activities, and under the gentle moonlight, they pair up to ride to the Ovoos. There, hand in hand, they pray for love. Men often sing aloud to express affection for a particular girl.

Horse Racing

One of the most exciting scenes in Xilin Gol, dubbed Horse Capital of China, is horse racing. Known as a "horseback people," Mongolians, particularly men, are talented riders; and horse races are major events at Nadam, a grassland carnival of Inner Mongolia.

One of the largest race tracks can be found in the city of Xilin Hot, with 7,000 seats and 260,000 square meters of equestrian area, available for international competition not only limited to racing, but other games as well.

Legend of the River

Xilin River is a famous inland river that runs through the grasslands of Xilin Gol. Its legends and tales have been handed down from generation to generation.

It is said that one day during his expedition, Genghis Khan (1162–1227), founder of the Mongol Empire, was awed by the beautiful scenery of the grassland along the banks of the Xilin, so he galloped down the river with his wife. During the ride, his wife's scarf fell off without her noticing. When looking back, they both saw the scarf split the river into nine bends and 18 turns.

The legendary location can be found 15 kilometers south of Xilin Hot, and the Nine Bends and 18 Turns have been enchanting as a scenic spot ever since. When night falls, tourists can enjoy Mongolian singing and dancing in yurts on the riverbanks while tasting boiled mutton and milk tea, before joining a circle of dancers around a big bonfire after supper.

Wrestling. by Zheng Shiming

Partying. by Qi Hao

Lassoing. by Zheng Feng

Carnival of Nadam

Nadam is a century-old festival with strong Mongolian flavor, and a favorite sports meet for Mongolian people. The most famous gathering is found in Xilin Gol.

In the Mongolian language, Nadam means "game and entertainment" to celebrate good harvests. It is an annual gathering that usually falls on the fourth day of the sixth month on the lunar calendar.

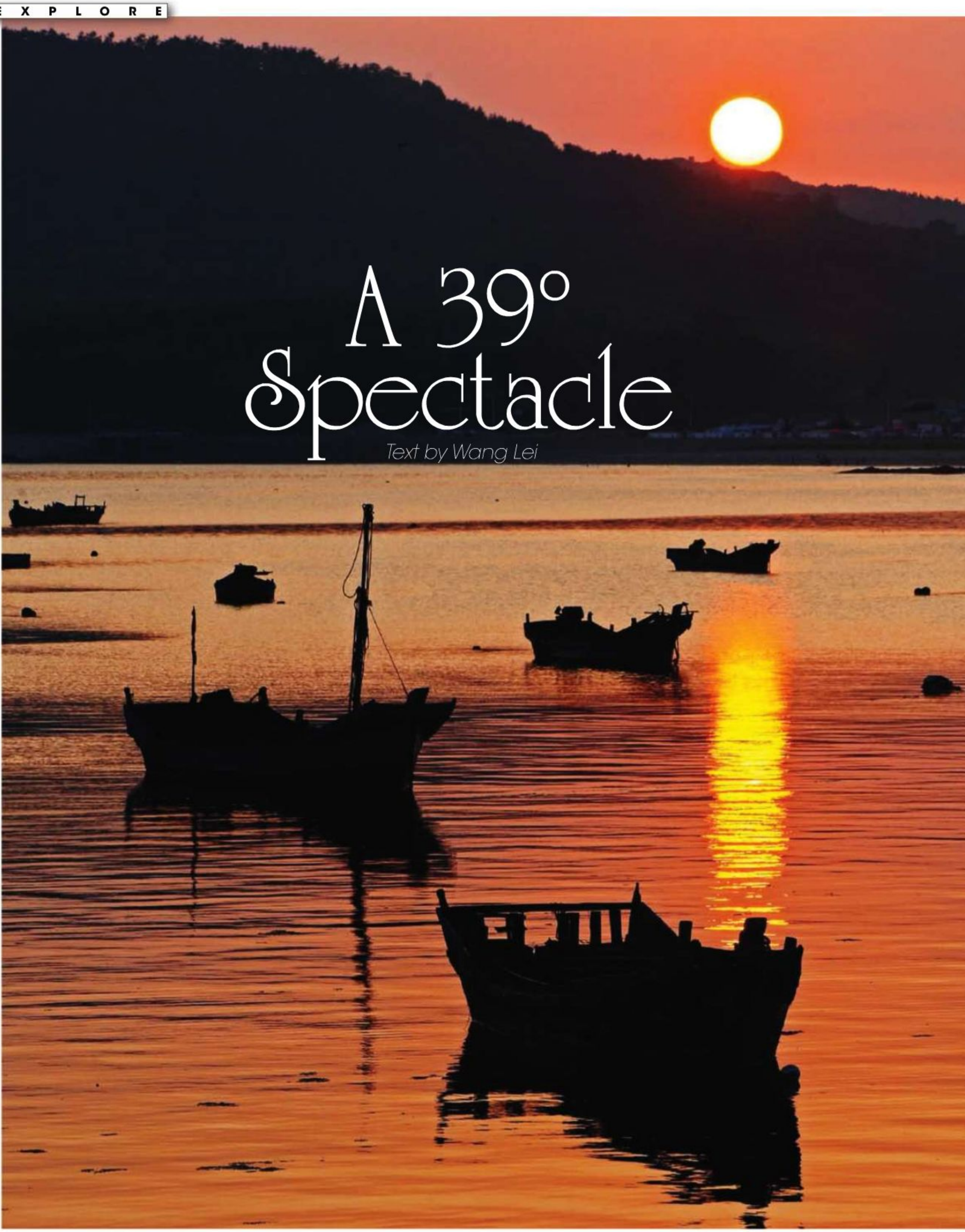
Carnivals can vary widely in size and scale. The largest carnival usually lasts seven to ten days, with 512 wrestlers and 300 horses. The medium lasts five to seven days, with participation of 256 wrestlers and 100 to 150 horses. The smallest of the festivals last three to five days, with 64 or 128 wrestlers and 30 or 50 horses. All people, regardless of religion, are welcome to compete.

The township of Ales Bulag held its first Nadam during early August of this year. It has a population of 3,141 in an area of 3,786 square kilometers, 100 kilometers north of downtown Xilin Hot.

There, the most popular carnival events are horse racing, wrestling, archery, and lassoing. Tanned, well-built wrestlers usually begin their event with great leaps and powerful arm swings. Riders in red scarves urge their mounts onward with whips and spurs. The Mongolian people are also talented archers. After a day of games, participants entertain themselves by singing and dancing.

July is the best season for traveling, when the sky is blue with snow-white clouds hovering above the vast green expanses of grass.

Welcoming guests. by Zeng Hongji



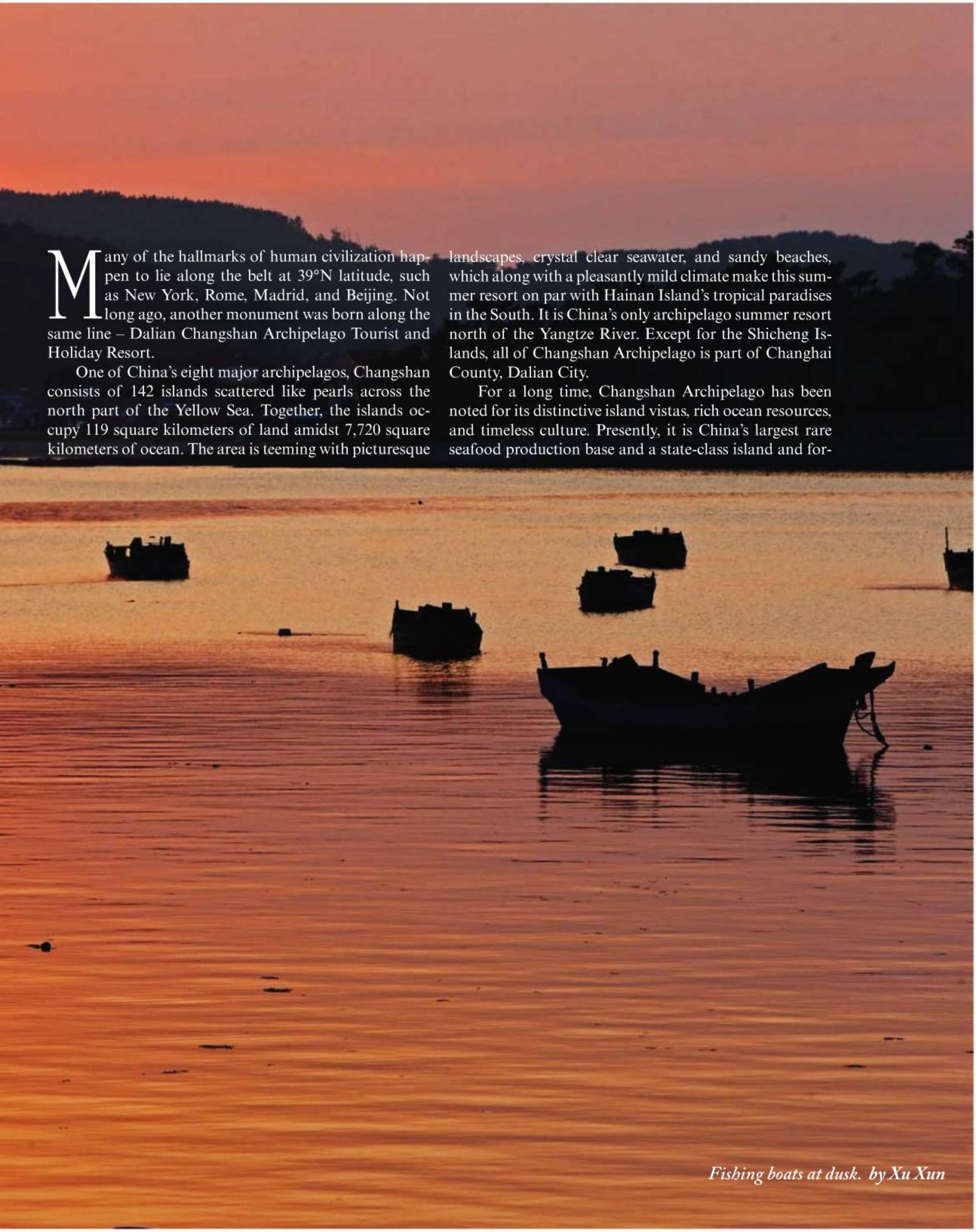
A 39° Spectacle

Text by Wang Lei

Many of the hallmarks of human civilization happen to lie along the belt at 39°N latitude, such as New York, Rome, Madrid, and Beijing. Not long ago, another monument was born along the same line – Dalian Changshan Archipelago Tourist and Holiday Resort.

One of China's eight major archipelagos, Changshan consists of 142 islands scattered like pearls across the north part of the Yellow Sea. Together, the islands occupy 119 square kilometers of land amidst 7,720 square kilometers of ocean. The area is teeming with picturesque landscapes, crystal clear seawater, and sandy beaches, which along with a pleasantly mild climate make this summer resort on par with Hainan Island's tropical paradises in the South. It is China's only archipelago summer resort north of the Yangtze River. Except for the Shicheng Islands, all of Changshan Archipelago is part of Changhai County, Dalian City.

For a long time, Changshan Archipelago has been noted for its distinctive island vistas, rich ocean resources, and timeless culture. Presently, it is China's largest rare seafood production base and a state-class island and for-



Fishing boats at dusk. by Xu Xun

An abalone harvest. by Mao Jianjun

Roe Island features state-of-art seafood cultivation technology. by Du Jiang

est park. In 2009, Changhai County officially opened to foreign investors and was included into Liaoning's provincial development and opening strategy for its coastal economic zone. In April 2010, Dalian Changshan Archipelago Tourist and Holiday Resort was founded, aiming to transform China's first international archipelago resort by adding facilities for conventions, recreation, sports, fitness, entertainment and sightseeing.

Hao Ming, secretary of the Party Working Committee for the resort and secretary of the Party Committee of Changhai County explained, "According to the *Overall Planning of Dalian Changshan Archipelago Tourist and Holiday Resort*, we will develop each island to highlight its best characteristics. Particularly, we will focus on the development and opening of bigger islands. For instance, Greater Changshan Island will become a core summer resort, Lesser Changshan Island an international sea angling center, Guanglu Island an international recreation and convention center, Roe Island a national fishing economic zone, and Haiyang Island a national marine nature reserve to preserve its green and low-carbon ecosystem."

In summer, Changshan Archipelago receives plentiful precipitation. However, the islands are even more spectacular during the rain. Right at latitude 39°N, Roe Island is far away from the mainland and major sea routes, and its nearby seawater features torrential ocean

Scenic Changshan Archipelago. by Xu Xun

The bathing beach on Moon Bay of Guanglu Island. ***by Du Jiang***

currents with high self-cleaning capacity. Additionally, local water temperature, salt content, and depth combine with sandy seabeds and reefs to offer an ideal habitat for sea cucumbers. The rare seafood produced there is known for distinctive taste and nutrition.

Visitors to Roe Island Fishing Group, a renowned ecological fishing enterprise in China, are often impressed by its marine farms which breed rare seafood like abalones and sea cucumbers. In an ecological marine farm that covers 667 hectares, photographers have recorded how workers harvest seafood. Seafood enthusiasts are often eager to taste scallops straight of the water. Despite their slight fishy odor, fresh scallops taste sweet. Some consider the island's fare the best seafood they've ever tasted.

Roe Island already has a global reputation for its abundance of rare seafood including not only abalones, but also scallops, sea urchins, clams, and soldier crabs. For decades, locals have enjoyed prosperity due to the profitable seafood industry. Long ago, before telephones were prominent in China's rural areas, each household on the island was equipped with a phone, making it China's first village with a telephone network. Also, the island's primary school is particularly magnificent compared to most public buildings. Residents have invested more than 10 million yuan to build an artificial beach with imported sand. Today, the island is a renowned summer resort, celebrated for its fantastic landscapes.

Tourism has become a new economic growth point for Changshan Archipelago. ***by Yuan Qi***

The superb breeding technology developed by Roe Island ensures the high quality of local sea cucumbers. ***by Zhang Xian***

Earthly Paradise Excursion

Linking Zhejiang 2010

Text and photographs by Scott Huntsman

As I might have expected, the final boarding call for the early flight from Beijing to Hangzhou echoed through the airport as I jogged the last few meters to the gate. Within a few more minutes, I was fast asleep in my seat and the plane was in the air.

As English language consultant for *China Pictorial*, I was invited along with several other CIPG (China International Publishing Group) foreign journalists to travel to Zhejiang as part of the province's annual efforts to introduce their land to those who may not be so familiar with it. "Linking Zhejiang," was the title of the event, and when I saw the trip itinerary, I was a little overwhelmed at how packed the schedule was for the five-day journey.

During my stay in China, I've frequently heard Hangzhou recommended as a beautiful place to visit, but frankly, I lost some interest after seeing their television commercial over and over claim that Hangzhou was "the most beautiful city in China." Indeed, Chinese people from all over are quick to quote the ancient proverb asserting that "Heaven is blessed with paradise, and earth is blessed with Hangzhou and Suzhou."

But, I grew up at the foot of America's Rocky Mountains. I spent my summers hiking and camping, pulling trout out of mountain streams, water skiing in alpine lakes; winters snow skiing down pristine slopes and dipping in hot springs. I'm a tough sell when it comes to natural beauty, especially in a country with well over a billion people – when I grew up in America's sparsely populated mountain West.

By that afternoon, we were on a boat gliding across Hangzhou's world-famous West Lake. The water was indeed beautiful, but I was most shocked to learn how incredibly shallow it is, with an average depth of only a couple meters. In years past, it was even shallower, before recent efforts to increase its capacity and preserve the landmark. As my colleagues snapped their pictures, I couldn't help but long to try waterskiing on it. I learned to do it in a 2,000-meter-high mountain lake, where the water temperature is barely above freezing. With the blisteringly hot August Zhejiang temperature combined with the shallowness of the water, splashing down in West Lake would have felt like a bathtub. Yet, I didn't see a single motorboat pulling a skier. The Chinese hardly get into skiing, though. Some may even forget there's also a Winter Olympics.

It's no wonder historic emperors chose the retreat at Xixi Wetland as their preferred vacation spot.

Foreign journalists test an antiquated foot-powered water retrieval mechanism.

2000 MILE CLUB

The next day, we were off to Xixi National Wetland Park. I'm not quite as familiar with swamps, so the experience felt eerily similar to the Jungle Cruise at Disneyland. Around every corner I was halfway expecting a robotic hippo to emerge from the water so our tour guide could shoot it with a fake gun. After several minutes on the water, we docked at an island, where emperors of Chinese past dynasties apparently took refuge and entertained guests. Okay, I'll give them that the place is really nice. But I'm pretty sure those emperors didn't have air conditioning. Like West Lake, this wetland has more than a thousand years of history, but was noticeably smaller several decades ago, and again both the Chinese Central and Zhejiang provincial governments now recognize the importance of preserving such national treasures, so in recent years, some of the lost area has been reclaimed.

That evening, we were invited to a formal dinner with some high level government officials who were happy to share statistic testifying to Zhejiang's economic success, but I didn't need the numbers. In Beijing, I already knew dozens of Zhejiang natives who always seemed more in-tune with international cultural development, and more used to the concept of middle class than others in China. In fact, during the whole of the visit to Zhejiang, this feeling continued. With China's breakneck development in recent decades, a new rich class has emerged, only a single generation removed from farmers in the countryside. For them, life is about celebrating the fact that they now have so much money, waving it in others' faces, and living like kings. Trying to explain to these people why billionaire Warren Buffet still lives in the house he bought in 1957 for $30,000 would be a daunting task. At times it seems like China's new wealth just creates a greater divide between haves and have-nots, but the feeling was different in Zhejiang. As the government officials stressed, Zhejiang is often a model for other areas of China, and it should be for this reason – it has a far more developed middle-class. It has evidence of a growing suburbia. Actually, the unrestrained middle-"classism" made the place feel like home more than any of the natural beauty.

And yet, later that evening we were treated to one of the nicest dinners I've ever had in my life, with the wait-staff treating the foreign guests like royalty.

The next day in Hangzhou, we were taken to an apparent farmers' village that had been converted into a neighborhood of high-end design firms. No one in our group could fathom that such high-end townhouses were former farmers' homes, no matter how much our tour guide reiterated the fact. But perhaps we're just familiar with how Chinese farmers tend to live everywhere outside Hangzhou. Maybe that "middle-class" stuff in Zhejiang is truer than we could imagine.

After a couple nights in Hangzhou, we were off to nearby Jiaxing. There, our destinations weren't as much about natural scenery as they were about Zhejiang's economic development. We visited a young business complex that was hoping to evolve into a major film and television production base. It seems Jiaxing has its eye on developing into China's version of Silicon Valley. We were taken on a tour of a major factory that produces mobile phone for a variety of companies. We visited an animation studio that was actually impressive, and that's compared to the Disney lot in Burbank. Chinese animation is only recently peeking out from the huge shadow of immensely popular Japanese anime, but with clearly professional, major studios full of hundreds of animators hard at work, the rise of Chinese cartoons has more to come.

After too long of a bus trip, we made a short stop at a magnificent bridge linking islands in one of China's major archipelagos to the mainland. The bridge is named after the archipelago, Zhoushan, and it's one of the area's proudest engineering feats of recent years. The province built two mammoth bridges, rivaling the biggest and longest in the world, to provide road access to an island with a population of only a million – tiny by most Chinese standards.

Zhongnan Animation Studio's majestic building was bustling with creative activity.

Perhaps the highlight of the trip for me was the ancient and meticulously preserved town of Wuzhen, but I don't want to say too much because it deserves its own article. So be sure to read next month's issue.

And then we visited something I thought I would never see in China – a beach where people were swimming, known as South Sands Beach. I'm not sure if this was so surprising because Chinese people are terrified of exposure to the sun or to dirty water, but this one had attracted hundreds on a warm August weekday. The beach is particularly famous for sand sculptures, and perhaps because it's on an island, the sand and water is as clean as any beach I've seen in California.

In Ningbo, we finally had the chance to get away from the tours and enjoy some drinks at a bar on the riverside. There, another foreigner saw our group of several white faces, and asked where we were from. Of course, "Beijing" is the quick answer, but of course in China it's never that easy, so I proceeded to explain that we were from the United States, Australia, Germany, France, Spain, and Japan – a veritable United Nations of foreigners all employed by Chinese state media. Chinese media, like Zhejiang sponsors of the "Linking" event, are going through great lengths to help the world become more familiar with the new biggest international tourism destination country on the planet (sorry, France). And Zhejiang wants you to remember that there are plenty of other places in China besides Beijing. In fact, many of Zhejiang's major cities seem like satellite suburbs of Shanghai, and they're usually only about an hour away from the megalopolis by high-speed train.

China is a huge country, and although the über-famous tourist attractions such as the Great Wall and Forbidden City usually lure foreign tourists to places like Beijing, it's no accident that Beijing gets so much exposure because it and Shanghai are where virtually all foreign journalists live. A second-tier city like Hangzhou, with all its natural beauty, has a continually uphill battle to compete for foreign tourism when foreign word-of-mouth inevitably leads to Beijing. The truth is, you could spend years traveling through China's vast territory and continually be surprised. So, for those ready to really visit China, be sure to pencil in some time to swing by Zhejiang.

Hangzhou's West Lake. The submerged "towers mirroring the moon" are so famous that they're featured on the reverse of the 1 yuan bill.
by Tan Xingyu

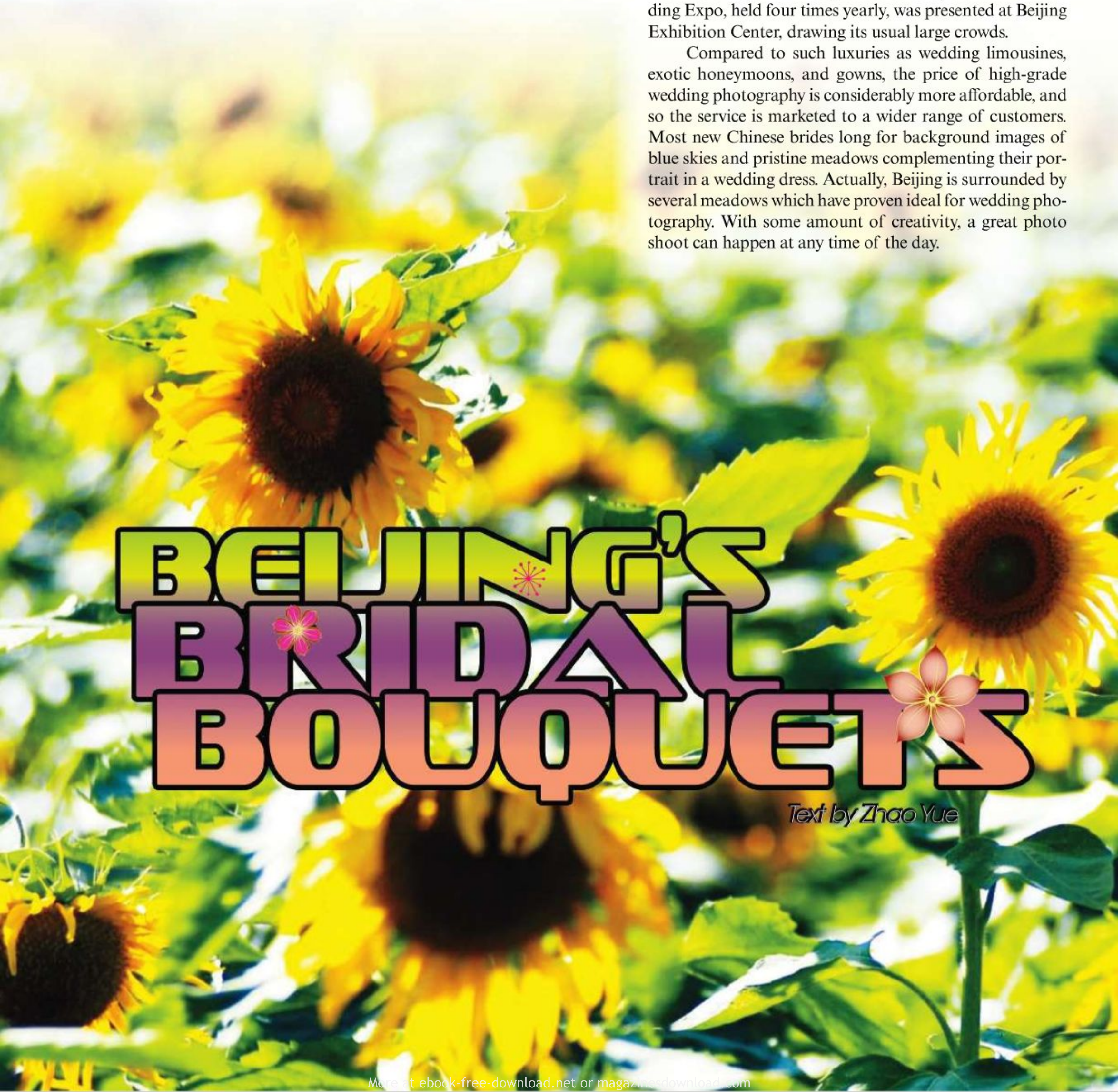
BEIJING'S BRIDAL BOUQUETS

Text by Zhao Yue

Stopping to smell the sunflowers. by Wei Yao

Those of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds often cultivate starkly contrasting perspectives of the same things. Marriage customs vary drastically throughout the world, but almost every culture regards it as one of the most important rituals in life. In recent years, the growing wealthy class of Chinese has paid more and more attention to weddings. Many families are more than willing to spend every available cent to produce an once-in-a-lifetime event, perhaps hoping that the event only happens once in a lifetime. Accordingly, the wedding products and services industries are flourishing. From September 3 to 5, the China Wedding Expo, held four times yearly, was presented at Beijing Exhibition Center, drawing its usual large crowds.

Compared to such luxuries as wedding limousines, exotic honeymoons, and gowns, the price of high-grade wedding photography is considerably more affordable, and so the service is marketed to a wider range of customers. Most new Chinese brides long for background images of blue skies and pristine meadows complementing their portrait in a wedding dress. Actually, Beijing is surrounded by several meadows which have proven ideal for wedding photography. With some amount of creativity, a great photo shoot can happen at any time of the day.



Passionate Sun Flowers

They attracted the lenses of countless television and movie cameras, not to mention the brushes of Vincent Van Gogh. Their beauty has become synonymous with vitality and warmth, and they have become iconic images for the sentimental. They are sunflowers.

China's Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia regions host the country's largest sunflower plantations, but the area around the outskirts of Beijing through Hebei Province is also suitable for the flower. During recent years' tourism boom, the region's towns have noticed the sunflower's impact on local economies and tourism development. As the tourism industry continues to rise, large areas of sunflowers are popping up in more and more locations. The planters hope that the colorful blossoms will help lure tourists away from the cold concrete of the metropolises.

Qianjiadian in Yanqing County of Beijing is home to a sunflower sea that can frequently be seen in wedding photos. The meadow requires a three-hour drive from downtown Beijing, but pleasant scenery, decent road conditions, and quaint village restaurants make the trip an enjoyable experience. Sunflower fields flank the highway through Qianjiadian Town, which locals have dubbed "A Picture Gallery for a Hundred Miles." On weekdays, the tourist flow is low, and since the highway is so long, the fields are usually left in tranquility. Due to the local climate, their blossoms bloom later in the year than normal, and remain beautiful throughout August and even into September.

Many first-time visitors to the fields are amazed at the seemingly endless patches of sunflowers. During the summer months, over 133 hectares of sunflowers are in full bloom, smiling brightly at the sun. On days following rain, tourists enjoy exceptionally blue skies and fluffy white clouds to complete the picture. However, the nearby emerald mountains provide a stunning backdrop to the flowers on any day. The fields of sunflowers surround more than 10 farms at various spots along the roadside. The views are most spectacular at Hongshiwan and Shaliangzi, making these locations the most popular for wedding photos.

Along with Yanqing County, Fangshan District's Shidu and Changgou, also in rural Beijing Municipality, have large sunflower meadows as well. The 87 hectares in Changgou Town form the largest single sunflower field in Beijing and the flower season lasts even longer than that of Yanqing, lingering deep into September.

Sunflowers at Yanqing, Beijing. by Wei Yao

Lavender fields of rural Beijing. ***by Liu Hanfei***

Lavender complemented by some background music. ***by Liu Hanfei***

Provence in Beijing

Provence, the famously beautiful region of southern France, is a legendary honeymoon destination. Just the mention of its name usually conjures images of purple lavender fields under stunningly blue skies.

For those who long for a lavender backdrop for their wedding pictures, but don't want to include plane tickets to France as part of the photo budget, some decent lavender fields can be found on the outskirts of Beijing. In the past two years, many farm villas featuring lavender have popped up in the municipality's suburban areas, especially in Miyun and Huairou. At the China Wedding Expo, the lavender field shots usually enjoy the most prominent placement by proud photographers.

"Purple Paradise" is the most famous lavender garden in Beijing. Nestled in Miyun's Gubeikou area, which features nice roads and tourist facilities, the garden is a three-hour drive from downtown.

Like many of Beijing's meadows, lavender in this garden is not the same as in Provence, and blooms later in the season. Their blossoms begin to appear in August and last throughout September. When walking through the purple sea, your nose will catch a mild and lasting scent rather than the strong, distinct lavender aroma. Like many flower villas around Beijing, Purple Paradise plants quite a few other purple plants and herbs such as sage, to better suit the local conditions. Of course, for those looking for a genuine whiff of Provence, that can also be found around Beijing. Mengtian Villa in Miyun grows lavender imported straight from Provence, so its flower season lasts from mid-June to mid-July.

Due to the high cost of planting lavender, most lavender villas around Beijing charge admission and have agreements with photo studios. Usually, each individual lavender field is assigned to a specific studio, and so the field is only available for their customers. Be sure to research your destination thoroughly before making a visit.

Newlyweds pose for wedding photos in a lavender field, Beijing. ***Courtesy of Jiayi Studio***

A bird's eye view of Yuyuantan Park reveals a rainbow of colors. ***by Fang Shuo***

Fallen Petals in the City

While large sunflower and lavender fields can only be found in the rural areas of Beijing Municipality, beautiful flowers can also be enjoyed in the city proper. If you ask locals where the most beautiful urban attraction is in the spring, they will probably answer Yuyuantan Park's sakura.

Yuyuantan Park has been cultivating sakura for years, and its Sakura Festival has been running for more than two decades. Every April, sakura of different varieties bloom throughout the month. Some years, however, due to climate variations, the blossoms are still visible until mid-May.

A common problem for those desiring wedding photos in the park is huge groups of tourists all around. During the flower season, the park is packed with people from morning to evening. To capture a clear background, a high level of skill is required not just in photography, but in social grace as well. Those who may lack the necessary interpersonal communication ability often try the Beijing Botanical Garden. The garden is an ideal wedding photo spot with its plentiful sakura in spring along with larger spaces and fewer tourists on weekdays.

If you are enjoying the company of your loved one, finding your perfect flower sea around Beijing is probably easier than you think.

Capturing sakura at Yuyuantan Park. ***by Wei Yao***

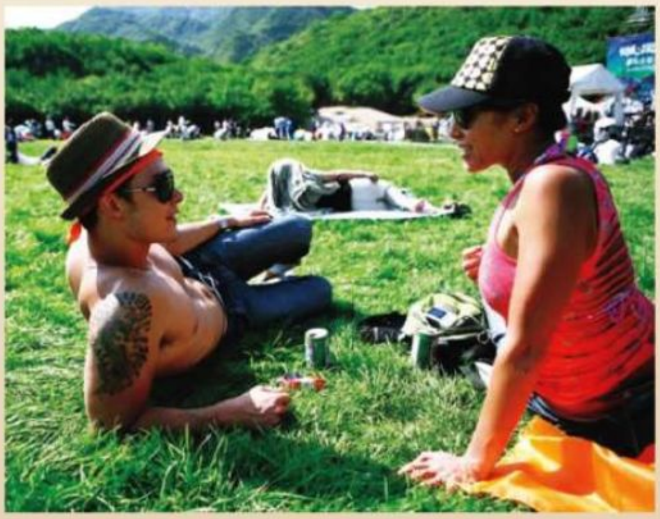
Singer Zhang Xuan performing.

Rocking the Great Wall

Text by Tan Xingyu
Photographs by Wu Chenghuan

The enthusiastic performance kindles excitement in the audience.

The summer of 2010 marked the 30th anniversary of the earliest Chinese rock music, and a series of concerts were presented in Beijing to celebrate. As part of the festivities, the first Great Wall Tanglewood Music Festival ran from August 27 to 29. The festival featured 72 bands performing for over 26,000 spectators. In addition to dozens of Chinese bands, crowds cheered for foreign groups such as The London Souls, Arms and Legs, and Grass Widow from the United States and Maximilian Hecker from Germany.



The music festival attracts many young couples.

In 1980, four students at Beijing International Studies University formed a group they called Wanlimawang (a combination of the founders' family names), which is considered the first rock band on the Chinese mainland. Its members included Wan Xing, Li Shichao, Ma Xiaoyi, and Wang Xinbo. The band focused on bringing the sounds of classic Western rock to China, showing a special fondness for the music of The Beatles. After three decades of development, with countless new bands emerging, rock music now occupies an important position in the scope of Chinese pop culture.

Lota Yu, a significant figure in the history of Chinese rock music, was one of China's most active musicians during the 80s and 90s. Many of his songs are still popular today. His performance at the festival was greeted with torrential applause. The audience sang along with every song, except for his newest release, "Shake Hands." Most of his classics evoke passionate feelings of nostalgia from his fans, especially "Comrade Lover," "The Story of Time," and "Love Song 1990."

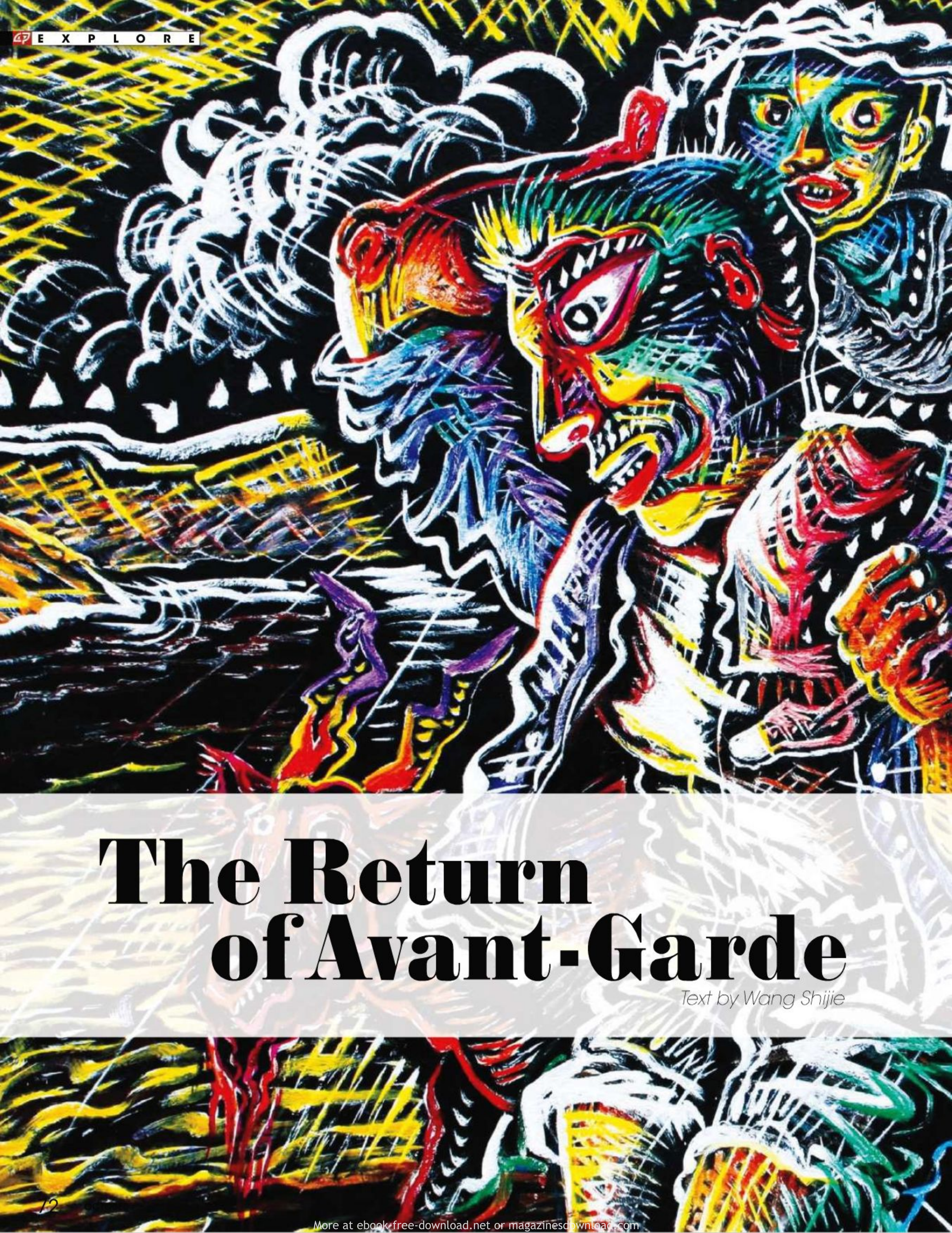
The music festival featured three stages, giving the audience a variety of choices at any given moment, including varying styles such as hard rock, ballads, pop, and electronic music. During the three-day festival, performances started in the afternoon and lasted until midnight. After the last performance each day, the 20,000-square-foot main stage at the foot of the Great Wall was opened for youngsters to revel and dance the night away.

Tanglewood Music Valley in Yanqing County, the site of the festival, is more than an hour's drive from downtown Beijing. Surrounded by mountains, the valley features a dozen square kilometers of pristine forests around several hectares of meadows, making it an ideal natural environment for concerts. Most spectators lounged in the meadow enjoying the music, while stylish outfits paraded through the crowds. Like most other music festivals, vendors hawking creative products could be found around the outskirts. "I really enjoy singing in this mountainside meadow," remarked Zhang Xuan, a renowned Chinese singer. "This is the 'greenest' music festival I've attended ever."

A highlight of the festival was the introduction of a campground, testifying to the increasing popularity of camping during summers in China. After each day's performances ended, some visitors returned to homes downtown, while others opted to camp in the wilderness. A veritable rainbow of tents painted the meadow, adding a certain serenity to the scene. To satisfy the demands of every visitor, the campground was outfitted with security guards, lights, and showers.

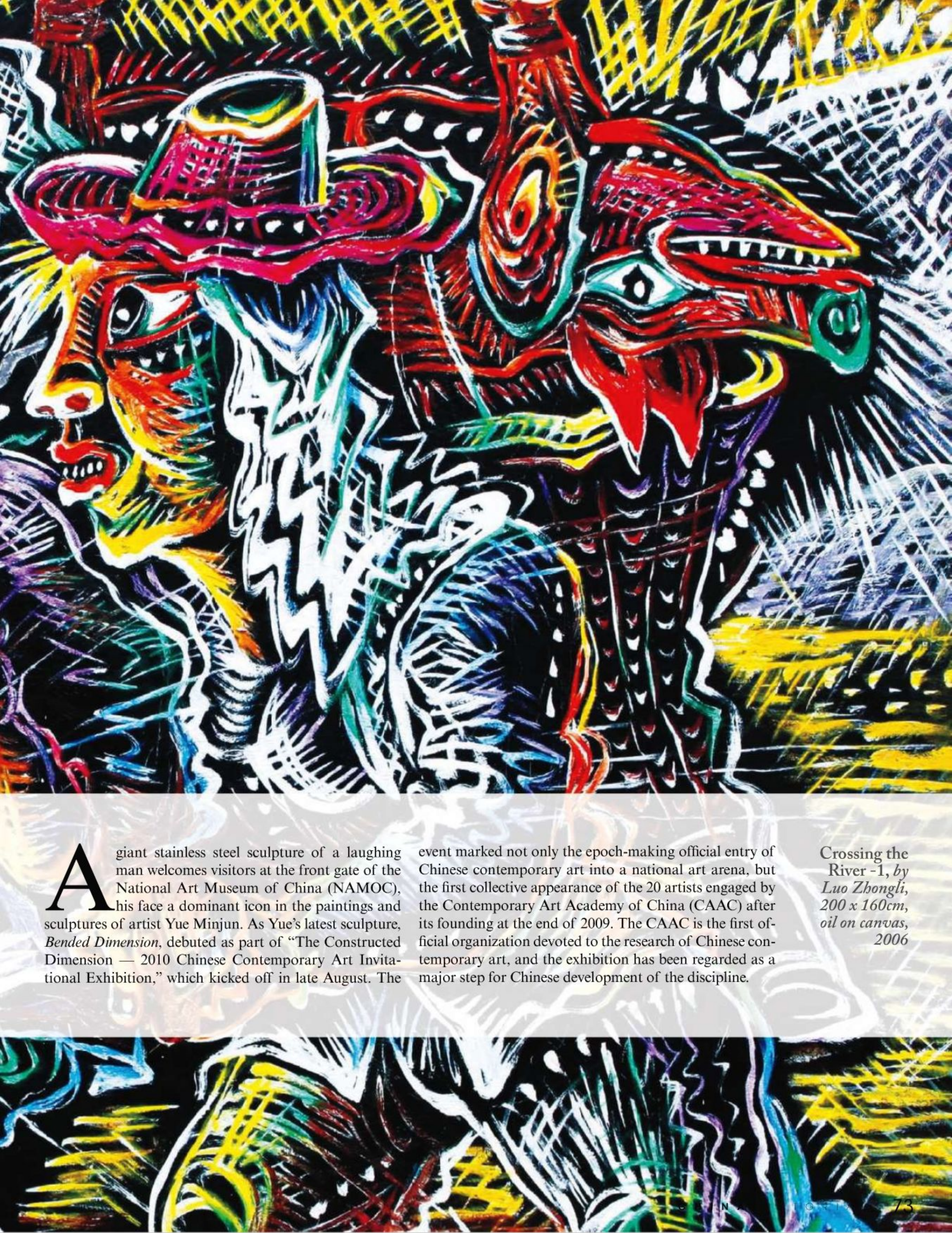
The Great Wall Tanglewood Music Festival is now considered one of the most environmentally-friendly festivals ever held in China. In addition to employing a considerable workforce to clean the area after the festival closed, organizers also joined hands with CNature, a Chinese environmental organization, to promote four-color garbage classification. Organizers took great lengths to ensure that everyone in the audience was in tune with protecting the environment as much as they stayed in tune with the music.

Before the performance begins, the audience relaxes while playing games.



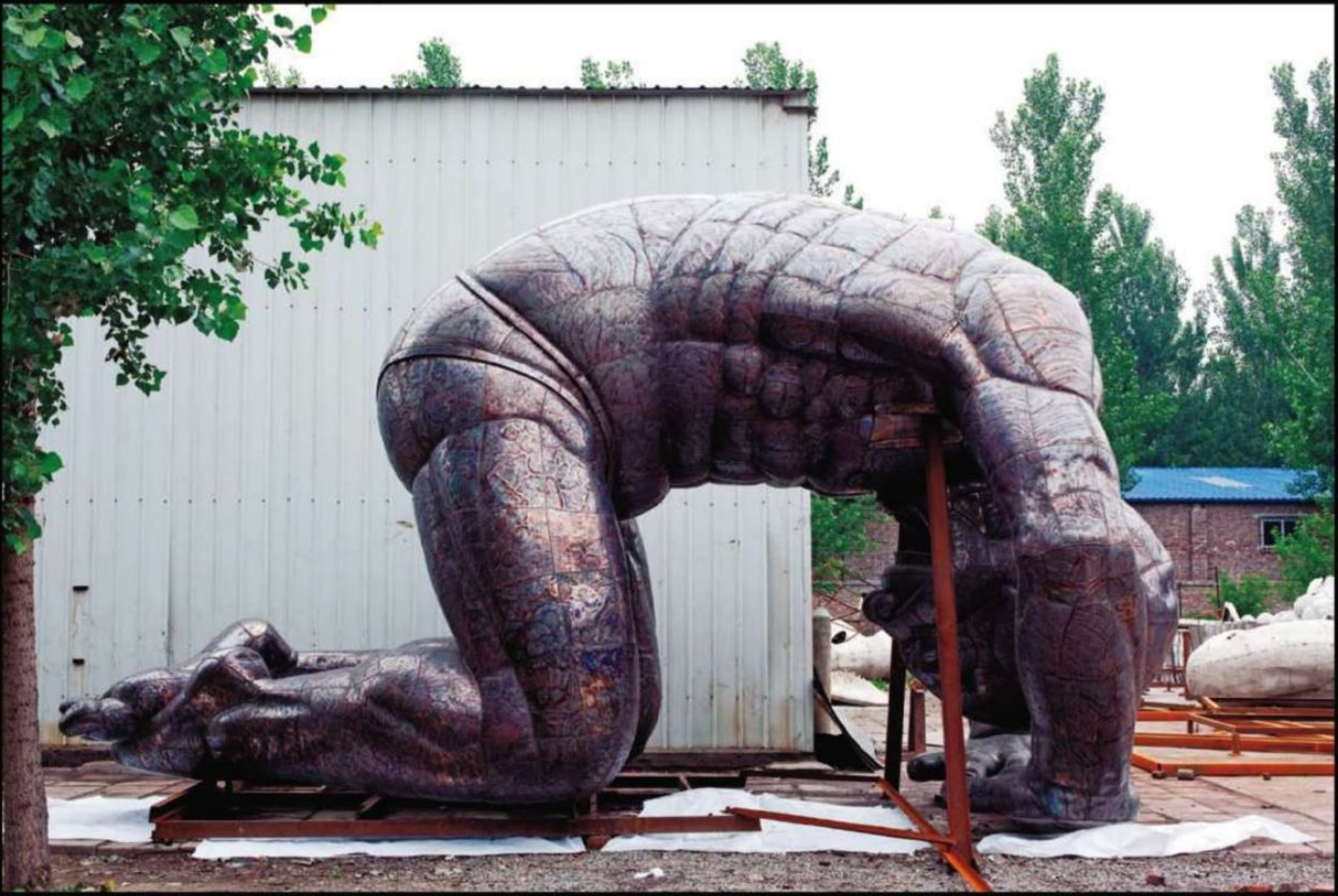
The Return of Avant-Garde

Text by Wang Shijie



A giant stainless steel sculpture of a laughing man welcomes visitors at the front gate of the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), his face a dominant icon in the paintings and sculptures of artist Yue Minjun. As Yue's latest sculpture, *Bended Dimension*, debuted as part of "The Constructed Dimension — 2010 Chinese Contemporary Art Invitational Exhibition," which kicked off in late August. The event marked not only the epoch-making official entry of Chinese contemporary art into a national art arena, but the first collective appearance of the 20 artists engaged by the Contemporary Art Academy of China (CAAC) after its founding at the end of 2009. The CAAC is the first official organization devoted to the research of Chinese contemporary art, and the exhibition has been regarded as a major step for Chinese development of the discipline.

Crossing the River -1, *by Luo Zhongli, 200 x 160cm, oil on canvas, 2006*



Bended Dimension,
by Yue Minjun,
780 x 470 x 412cm,
stainless steel, 2010

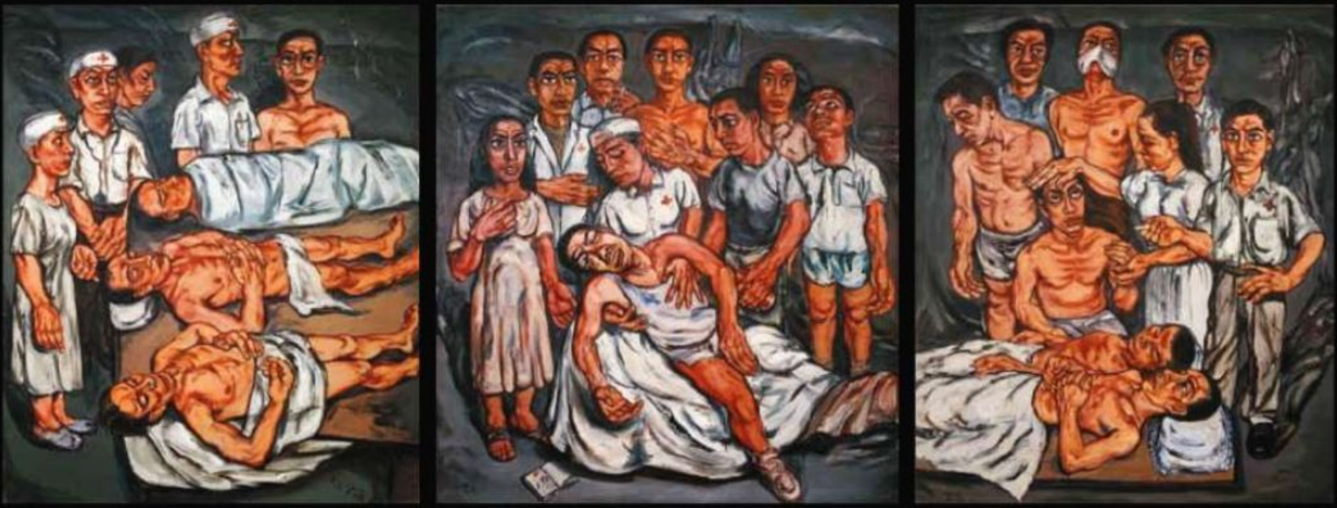
In the last three decades, Chinese contemporary art emerged, sprouted, developed, and matured into the diversified system it is today. After the introduction of reform and opening-up policies, China's breakneck growth brought about a new era of development in a variety of disciplines, contemporary art included. It has gradually evolved into a humanistic tradition with an eye on social issues and reforms with people as the focal point.

When it hit the China Art Gallery, the predecessor of the NAMOC, in 1989, China's Avant-Garde Exhibition sparked a sensation not just within China, but abroad as well. However, it closed shortly thereafter. Today, Chinese contemporary art has finally returned to the prestigious venue, with "The Constructed Dimension" dominating many of the exhibition halls, attracting leaders from the Ministry of Culture, China Art Academy, and the NAMOC, as well as prominent scholars and artists from a variety of fields in art and culture. Creators of the exhibits are representative artists from different periods and schools of the last 30 years, who were once regarded as deviants before gaining considerable respect and reputation in modern Chinese art circles. Many of them have been honored with prizes at international art exhibitions.

"The Constructed Dimension" also showcased artists' representative works that earned them earlier fame as well as their most recent creations. Among those, the most popular was Yue Minjun's *Bended Dimension*, memorable for its strange kneeling posture combined with a laughing face and four limbs touching the ground, which is hard for any visitor not to examine. A curious student even entered the bended body of the figure to explore his "buried laugh," which seems to inspire some kind of emotion in every patron.

Conversely, four FRP (fiber reinforced plastic) sculptures by Luo Zhongli appear more accessible and amiable. In *Night* and *Crossing the River*, the artist injects vitality into Mount Daba while depicting the happiness and contrasting sorrow of farmers living on the Sichuan mountain. Many visitors were clearly moved, and even those who regarded his 1980s oil painting, *Father*, as a spiritual icon of the era have been more than accepting of the newer images in his art.

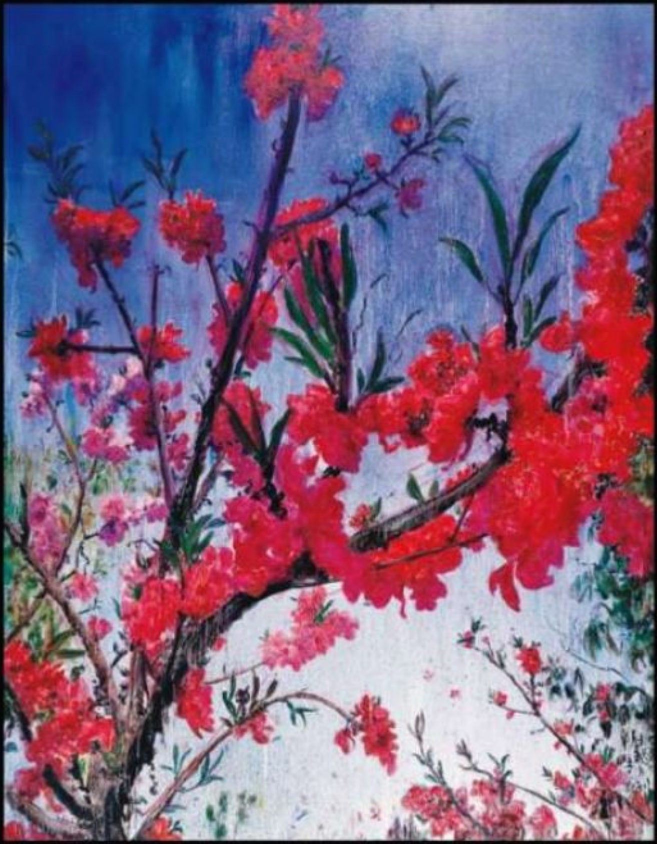
Zhang Xiaogang's newest oil on canvas, *About Sleep – 3*, depicts a Chinese face, deep in slumber. Zeng Fanzhi also exhibited another new creation, *Untitled.* The oil painting portrays the artist's iconic subject, a mask, with interwoven tree branches. The *Drifting* series of Zhan Wang is devoted to stainless steel rockery, and Sui Jianguo's *Portrait of a Blind Man* graced the east entrance to the art museum.



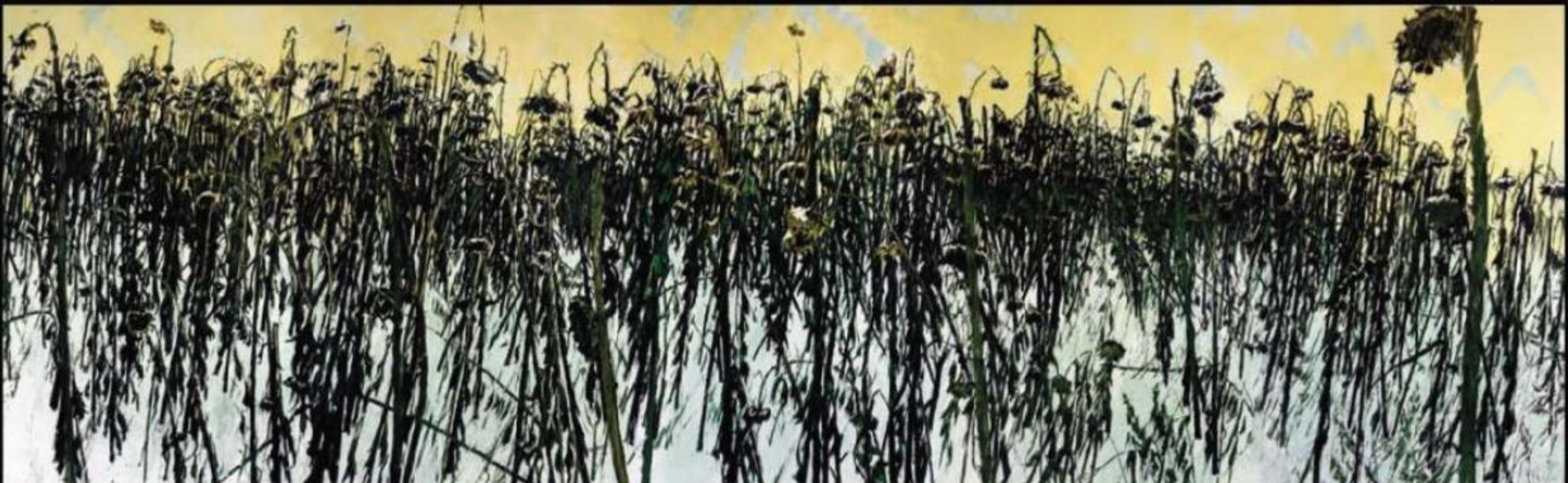
Hospital Triptych No.2, *by Zeng Fanzhi, 180 x 460cm (in 3 panels)*

To enhance the exhibition, NAMOC's Public Education Department organized a series of activities, including a speech on appreciating avant-garde art by Professor Zhu Qingsheng, an art theorist from Peking University. From Zhu's perspective, as part of the inevitable path of modernization, avant-garde art goes beyond the domain of traditional "fine arts" to explore and examine issues of life and society through innovating ideas and conceptions. The art museum also invited artists Ye Yongqing, Zhan Wang, and Qiu Zhijie to give lectures on their respective understanding of Chinese contemporary art. After a brief introduction to their careers, conceptions, and works on display, the artists each illustrated their perceptions of contemporary art before answering questions from the audience.

According to Luo Zhongli, another participating artist and president of the Contemporary Art Academy of China, the CAAC currently works to research, sort, and qualify academic material related to Chinese contemporary art and plans to publish a series of books to better document the art from the national angle. Another major task for CAAC is to build a contemporary art museum in Beijing. "All along, representative works of Chinese avant-garde artists are most often found overseas," noted Luo, "so the establishment of such a museum is a paramount issue for Chinese modern art development."



Don't Let Flower Go with the Running Water, *by Zhou Chunya, 280 x 200mm, oil on canvas, 2009*



Sunflowers, *by Xu Jiang, 280 x 900cm, oil on canvas, 2008*

Xie Xingfang, GAGOC.

Text by Chen Biao
Photographs by Chen Jian

THE JOY OF VOLUNTEERING

World Badminton champion Xie Xingfang keeps Beijing plates on her red Land Rover as she drives to her current office in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, after her retirement from the national team.

"I didn't think much about taking a towel from a volunteer when I was playing," she remarks. "I didn't realize how much volunteers do until I became involved in such work recently." Since December 2009, she has served as deputy director of the Recruiting Division of the Volunteers Department of the Guangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee (GAGOC).

Recent statistics show that GAGOC has recruited 590,000 volunteers so far, of whom 85,000 will serve during the Games, including 25,000 for the Asian Para Games, and 500,000 will participate in various voluntary services around the city. At the end of July 2010, the applicant count for both Games exceeded 900,000, with 86 percent of them from Guangzhou. Applicants from outside Guangdong surpassed 30,000. Of all applicants, the youngest is age six, and the oldest is 80. One applicant is from Yining in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 5,035 kilometers from the host city of Guangzhou.

Volunteer recruitment for the games ended on August 1, and will be followed by the selection process. Application period for city volunteers lasted until September 30. All recruitment procedures will be finished by the end of October.

The salute and logo of Asian Games volunteers. courtesy of GAGOC

志愿者
工作车
亚运会志愿者主体标识物

August 3, 2010: The inauguration ceremony of the volunteer campaign. courtesy of GAGOC

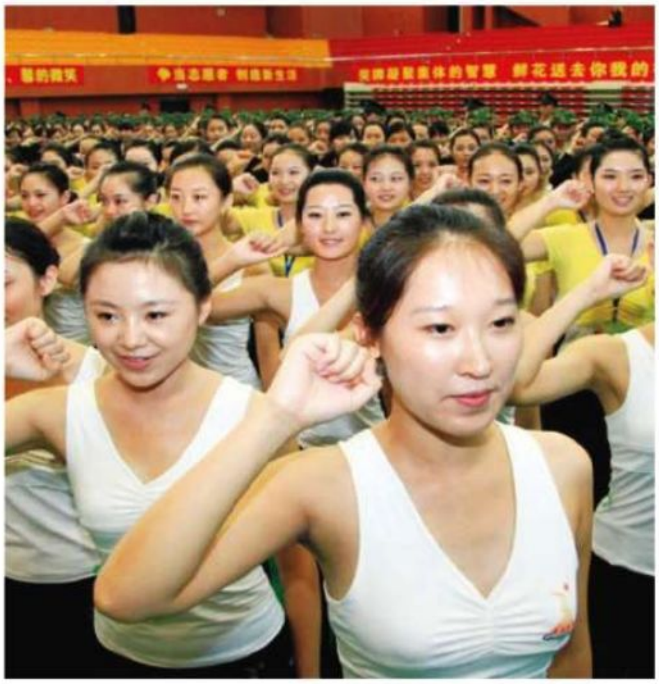
Backstage Efforts

It has been over 10 years since Xie Xingfang left Tianhe Sports Center in Guangzhou.

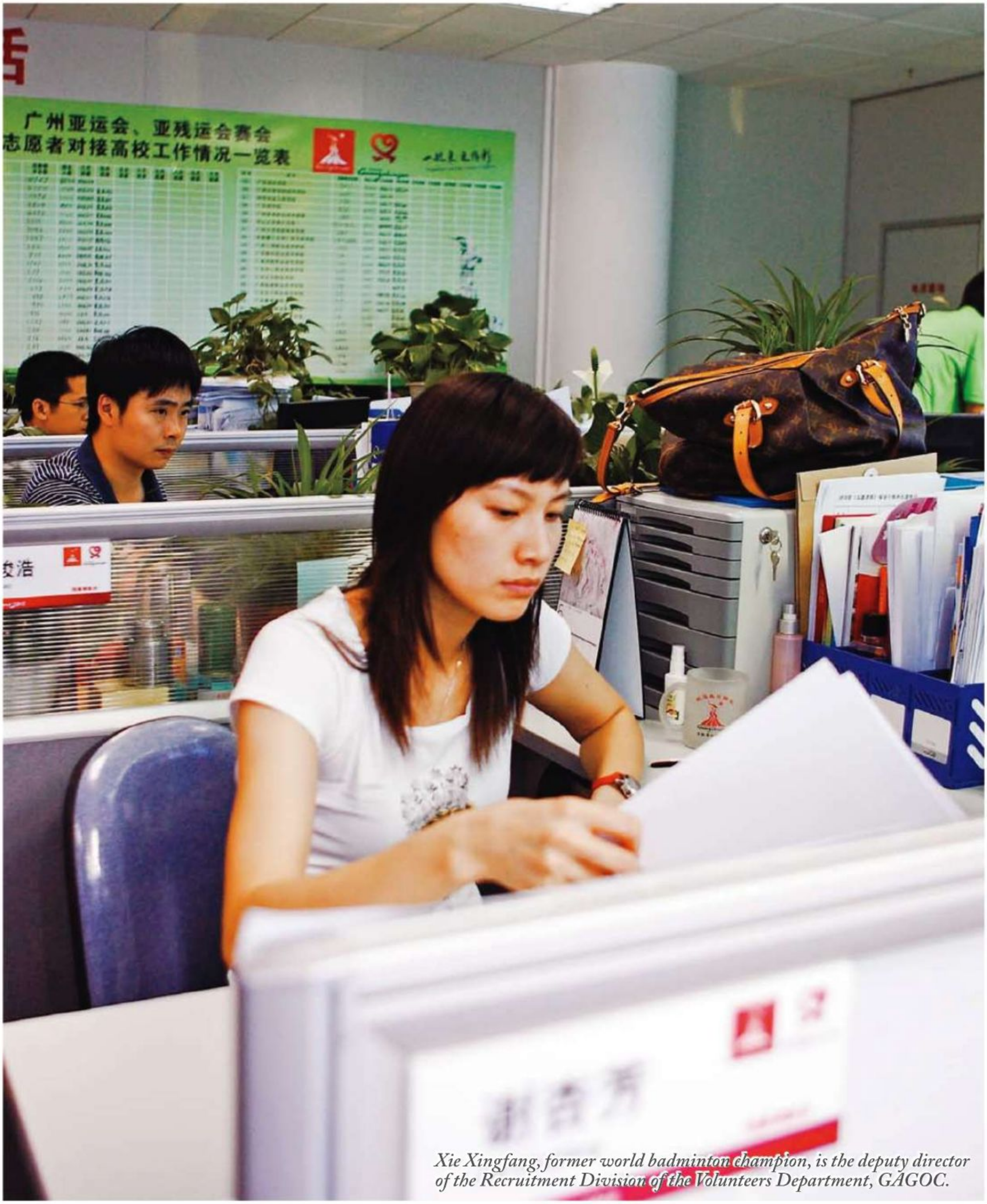
At that time, she was a young girl, dripping with sweat from competing for her dream of becoming the world badminton champion. Now that her dream has been realized, Xie works as a volunteer coordinator to serve others' big dreams at the Asian Games. "I'll be in charge of all volunteer efforts at six venues around Tianhe Sports Center," she explains, "serving events including badminton, soft tennis, softball, baseball, water polo, bowling, and football."

Xie didn't know much about volunteering until recently. During the preliminary soft tennis event in June, volunteers were required to begin preparations at the venue at 6 a.m. Also, they were the ones to turn off the lights no matter how late the competition lingered into the night. They worked both indoors and outdoors regardless of weather. Xie adds, "Some volunteers even worked the day before they had to take the college entrance exam."

"I hope I can join hands with as many athletes as possible in supporting volunteer efforts during the Games," she insists. Since beginning her work, she has invited several celebrity friends to join her, such as Hong Kong actor Dayo Wong, Zhong Nanshan from the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and fellow world badminton champ Lin Dan, who also happens to be her boyfriend.



August 11, 2010: Taking the oath. courtesy of GAGOC



Xie Xingfang, former world badminton champion, is the deputy director of the Recruitment Division of the Volunteers Department, GAGOC.

The Joy of Volunteering

"It was a big moment for me when I answered my first question as a volunteer," grins Zhong Xiaoyuan from the Recruitment Division of the Volunteers Department of GAGOC. "On my first day of answering hotline phones, I was nervous to press the button because I wasn't sure whether I could satisfy the caller's inquiry."

"As a volunteer, the greatest gain is the joy that no one else realizes," illustrates consulate employee Liu Dan, who serves as chief volunteer at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall station. She eagerly offers her service as a volunteer whenever she has spare time – mostly nights and holidays.

According to GAGOC, 500 volunteer stations will operate around Guangzhou and 30 of them are currently open on weekends, offering consultation services for transportation, shopping, tourism, and accommodations, while the others will serve visitors to major tourist areas and cultural scenic zones.

"Many of us are new at this," notes Liu Dan, "and it takes some time to get adjusted and learn the best ways to accomplish the most common tasks. Every week we launch various campaigns, such as learning English. Since our English proficiency varies widely, we begin with useful expressions for venues, scenic spots, things related to the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, and common routes to other tourist attractions."

Liu Dan related the story of Yo, a 63-year-old volunteer who was an overseas Chinese woman from Indonesia. "We were happy to have her help, but at the same time we were concerned because of her age. We decided to have her only work half days. Still, she was so enthusiastic that she insisted on working weekends. One day in April, a colleague noticed her face was twitching and became worried about a stroke. They sent Yo to the hospital right away, and within two months, she was fully recovered and working again as if she hadn't missed a step."

Serving with Heart and Soul

On June 24, the volunteering salute, organized by the Training Center of the Volunteers Department, debuted. Participants start by standing straight with the arms resting at their sides. They lift the right arm to make the shape of the logo of Chinese young volunteers, and then move the right hand to the heart with a thumb up and chant, "I'm happy because I'm willing! I'm the best because I serve with my heart and soul!"

"Smile bracelets became icons of volunteers at the Beijing Olympics," explains Qiu Fubing, director of the Training Center. "A hand over the heart is the logo of the Chinese Young Volunteers Association. What's the best way to embody the spirit of volunteers for the Guangzhou Asian Games? Ultimately, we were inspired by the spirit of the military and young pioneers to create our own unique salute."

Shao Zhengang from the Training Center is a volunteer himself. "We provide overall services for all volunteers, and offer training for the backbone force, which is 10 percent of the total." According to Shao, training courses are meticulously designed, practical, and professional. Designers considered a variety of factors, including psychological adjustment, national security, English practice, and disability assistance. To improve its service, the Training Center opened a special course for case analysis of similar work at the Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai World Expo, which has become a favorite subject for the attendees.

A campaign to publicize the Asian Games is launched at a station near a major pedestrian thoroughfare in Guangzhou. courtesy of GAGOC

一起来更精彩
第16届亚洲运动会
16TH ASIAN GAMES
距2010年11月12日开幕
倒计时 1 3 5 天

Zhong Xiaoyuan and Liu Dan, volunteers for the upcoming Asian Games.

New Executive Assistant Manager at Swissôtel Beijing

Swissôtel Beijing Hong Kong Macau Center is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Christian Vassal in the position of Executive Assistant Manager i/c Rooms Division recently.

Christian Vassal is a French national hotelier with more than 12 years of international and deluxe hospitality experience.

Christian Vassal has an extensive knowledge and experiences in Rooms Division operations with deluxe and premium properties, both corporate and resort. After joining Swissôtel Beijing Hong Kong Macau Center, Christian will lead all the Room Division team as well as being in charge of the daily operations.

Sportaccord Official Banquet was Held at Swissôtel Beijing

SportAccord held their official banquet at Swissôtel Beijing Hong Kong Macau Center on 31 August, 2010. The first SportAccord Combat Games 2010 was held in Beijing from 28 August to 4 September 2010, the competition will showcase 13 Martial Arts and Combat sports, both Olympic and non-Olympic. The banquet was chaired by Mr. Verbruggen, Chairman of the SportAccord International Sports Federation to thank the efforts which given by governmental officials of the city of Beijing. Among the participants of the banquet were Mr. Liu Qi, member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, and Mr. Guo Jinlong, mayor of the city of Beijing and other officials.

世界体育总会官方晚宴
SPORTACCORD OFFICIAL BANQUET
欢庆 & 友谊
CELEBRATION & FRIENDSHIP

Picture shows Mr. Verbruggen(R2), Chairman of the SportAccord International Sports Federation with Mr. Liu Qi(L1), member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

Halloween Revelry @ Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing

This Halloween, make like the Macbeth witches and head over to Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel. Indulge in the Red Devil themed dinner buffet at Coffee Garden at only RMB158 per person. If Chinese food is more to your ghoulish tastes, The Horizon has a line-up of specialty dishes waiting. After this delicate feast, go wild at Centro for our Red Devil themed party! Be entertained by the jazzy rock tunes performed by our in-house band Kokoh Conley Trio, while our skilled bartenders serve up their poison of choice – The Red Devil cocktail. Exclusively available only on 31 October 2010, take home the Halloween spirit with our specially designed pumpkin-shaped cake at Bento & Berries.

Please contact the F&B department at (86 10)6561 8833 ext. 6356 for more details or reservations.

Low-Carbon Life Starts on Bicycle

Low-Carbon life is a lifestyle and accesses in daily life. Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown supplies the free-use bicycle service for their guests, which makes the short-distance move around more healthy, convenient and without producing massive amounts of pollution.

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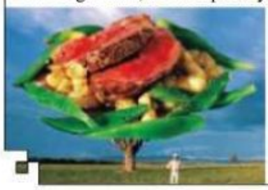
website: www.holiday-inn.com/beijing-dwtn

The Best of Australia Intercontinental Beijing Financial Street

The InterContinental Beijing Financial Street, in partnership with Meat & Livestock Australia, present The Best of Australia in Monsoon Restaurant from October 15 to November 15, 2010.

Featuring Australian beef and lamb, the Land Down Under is famous for its meats. Livestock are grain fed, which enhances the tender, juicy and rich flavors of the meat while retaining natural nutrients. Enhance your dining experience with some of the finest Australian wines, seafood and traditional sumptuous desserts.

Join us, along with Guest Chef David Carew, winner of 8 Australian Innovation Awards, as he showcases Australian beef and lamb in both traditional and his own signature, contemporary style.



Monsoon Restaurant
5th floor of InterContinental Beijing Financial Street
Phone: 5852 5916 or 5852 5917

Camões Portuguese Restaurant at Legendale Hotel Beijing

Indulge yourself with any choice of 3 courses from our selective menu for only RMB 333, plus complementary glass of Portuguese region white and red wine.

The outdoor terrace is perfect for a casual dining and relaxes amidst in the greenery surrounding.

Open 7 days a week
Lunch 12:00 noon – 14:30 pm
Dinner 18:00 pm – 22:30 pm

For reservations and inquiries, please call (86 10) 8511 3388 ext. 8920 (Camões Portuguese Restaurant).

Apple and Pear Extravaganza at the Lobby Lounge in China World Hotel, Beijing

Lobby Lounge greets the coming of autumn to Beijing with a selection of its best signature apple and pear cakes, meant to be savoured and enjoyed at leisure in the opulence of its majestic Chinese palace-inspired surroundings, to the accompaniment of live classical music.

Not to be missed are the delightful miniature pastries created by China World Hotel's award-winning pastry team, to be paired with six kinds of new cakes, such as apple crumble tart, pear jalousie and william pear mousse in shooter.

For reservations, please call (86 10) 6505 2266 ext 37 or the Restaurant Reservations Centre at tel: (86 10) 6505 5838.

Hairy Crab Feast at Summer Palace in China World Hotel, Beijing

Summer Palace invites you to indulge in Beijing's favourite autumn feast – delectable, seasonal fresh hairy crabs.

Savour them in deliciously-heady dishes such as "Steamed Crab Roe and Egg White in Crab Shell", "Yang Zhou Lion Head Minced Pork Marinated with Codfish, Crab Roe and Crab Meat" and "Sauteed Crab Roe and Meat with Eight Treasures". Available from 15th Oct to 30th Nov.

For reservations at Summer Palace, please call (86 10) 6505-2266 ext. 34, email: fbreservations.cwh@shangri-la.com

Crab-licious

Let's indulge in this Crab Season only @ Rouge & Valley Café in Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun.

Enjoy your mouth watering hairy crab specially prepared by our chefs. It is the best choice for entertaining your business clients or partner over lunch & dinner. The Chinese Master Chef He's recommendations will not fail to disappoint you or your taste buds.

Receive a complimentary hairy crab per person with Semi-buffet lunch & dinner orders.

Semi - buffet lunch RMB 98 / per person, Semi – buffet dinner RMB 168 / per person. All subject to 15% service charge.

For reservations, please call +86 10 5993 8888.

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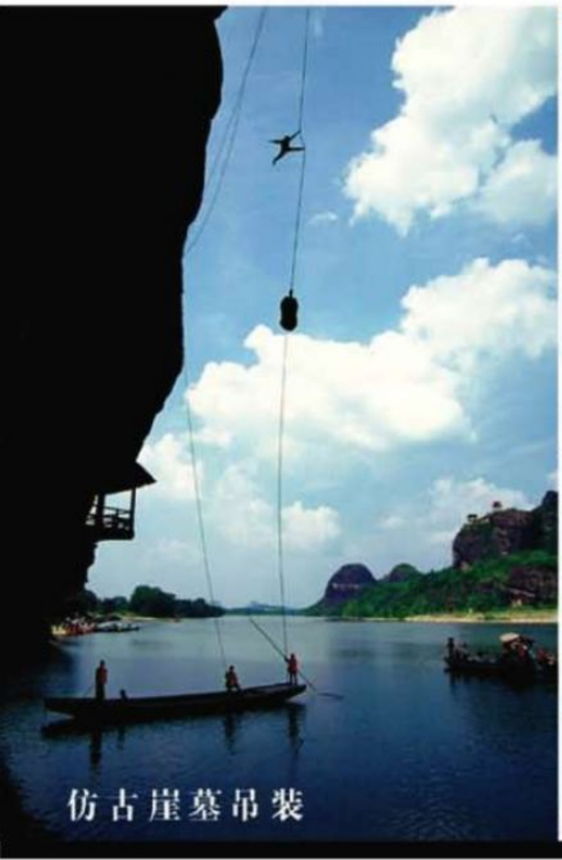
仙水岩景色
The view of Xianshui Rock

There Exists A Millennium Place in China!

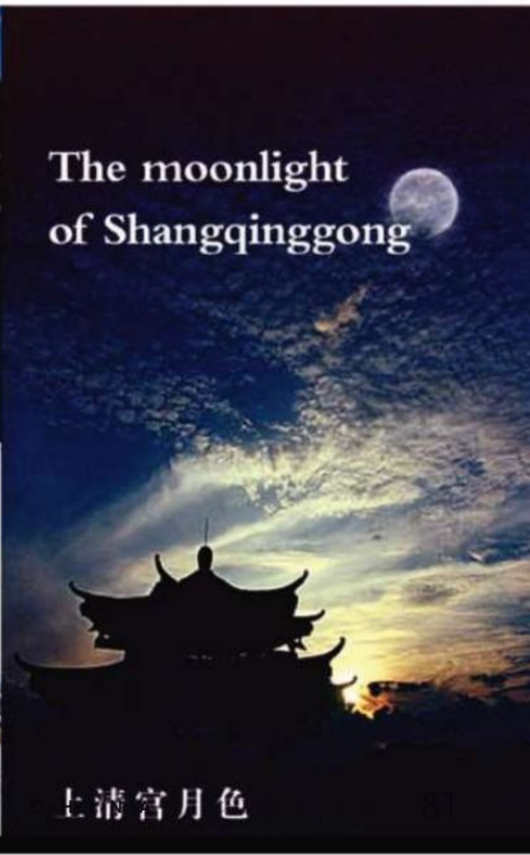
--the Taoist Holy Place in China the World Geopark Dragon and Tiger Mountain in Jiangxi



仿古崖墓吊装

Taoist Temple 山顶道观

The new tourist centre
新游客中心



The moonlight of Shangqinggong
上清宫月色

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